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Is Christianity from God?

IS CHRISTIANITY FROM GOD?

OR,

A Manual

OF

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE,

FOR

SCRIPTURE READERS, CITY MISSIONARIES, SUNDAY
SCHOOL TEACHERS, &c.

BY THE

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"Thy word is Truth."—JOHN xvii. 17.  
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PREFACE.

THE following pages are not meant for learned theologians, who already know all they contain, and a great deal more, but for Scripture-readers, for City missionaries, Parochial and Sunday-school teachers, and others, who ought to know something of the outlines of Christian evidence.

Deeper solutions can be given of many of the difficulties that are quoted in this work, but such solutions would be inconvenient alike to teachers and learners, in the circumstances to which I have referred. Simple and short explanations are, therefore, far preferable: these are more easily remembered, and most thoroughly understood. In the present age, a ready reply, like ready money, is most valuable. The Author trusts his readers will not suppose he has said all that can be said on every point. He has given the simplest, shortest, and most intelli-

gible outlines of the Christian evidence, rather than the most powerful and conclusive.

Should it enable the teacher of others to solve any perplexities with ease, which he has heretofore failed to explain with satisfaction to himself or conviction to the pupil; or should it furnish any one with an additional reason for the faith that is in him, or in any degree commend and vindicate the word of God, the Author will be amply rewarded.

This the writer is truly convinced of, that they that read the Bible oftenest, and most attentively, will be most deeply persuaded of its Divine origin. A self-evidencing virtue goes forth from it; and they that thus read it feel within them living proofs of its divinity, and would rather part with all near and dear things than surrender their belief in the inspiration of a book which peoples heaven with their departed relatives—opens to them springs of real consolation upon earth—and lifts the veil that conceals from their eyes yet brighter and more glorious prospects in eternity. The Saviour said, “Thy word is truth;” and innumerable hearts from their inmost depths answer, “It is.”

There are many thousands who have never examined, and therefore are not convinced

by the evidences of Christianity. Perfect masters in law, or in medicine, or in literature, or in science, they are utterly uninformed on that "one thing needful," in comparison of which all these things are as straws floating on the surface of the current of life.

The most irrational persons upon earth are surely those who will not investigate the claims of a religion which, right or wrong, declares itself to be the only communication of the mind of God. Either the Bible is divine, and justly demands supremacy in all religious discussions, or it is a gross imposture: any thing between it cannot be. The most inexcusable and unjustifiable course that any can pursue, is that of indifference or ignorant contempt.

Scripture proclaims such to be fools, and those only who read and understand to be wise. The prodigal was not "come to himself," or, as we say, was beside himself, till he was restored to his home. The insanity of our asylums is that of the intellect. The insanity of thoughtless millions is that of the heart. There is a parallelism between the two states. Let us look at it. A very common mark of insanity is insensibility to conclusive evidence. No weight of reasoning

will sway the insane. But is not the unbeliever dead to the claims of truth, that are bright with the signature of God, and resplendent with the glories of heaven? Does not all creation, from the lowly violet in the sequestered vale, to the vast orb in the firmament, proclaim as one great choir, "the hand that made us is Divine?" and is not insensibility to this, insanity? It is thus, then, that the unbelieving spectator of creation, as well as "the undevout astronomer, is mad." Does not Revelation give still more cogent proofs of its authorship? Are not His foot-prints in its every page? Is it not the record of His ways? Is it not written in deeds of power, and acts of beneficence and mercy? Has it not survived all opposition, defied all proscription? Do not martyrs from their flameshrouds, and saints from their beds of glory, declare, "Thy word is Truth?" Is not all confusion without it? Yet the sceptic rejects all, and would extinguish all. Surely his is the insanity of the seaman who would cast away his chart and compass in the storm, or the raving, as it is the impotence, of him who would blot out the sun, and moon, and stars, from the dome of earth.

Indifference to momentous interests, visibly

in perii, is strong evidence of insanity. Were we to see a man perfectly indifferent in the midst of the blazing rafters of his house, we could not help concluding that the man was deranged. Does he manifest greater sanity who hears of a nearing hell and a departing heaven, and yet remains in absolute apathy? Is it other than a maniac's folly to be vexed about toys, and to be careless of everlasting realities? Shakspeare describes king Lear as gathering straws with the hand which had wielded a mighty sceptre; and a greater than Shakspeare describes the king of Babylon as herding with the beasts of the field, in order that they may thus give vivid pictures of humanity in its ruins. Have not these dis-crowned kings a thousand living antitypes? What Divine faculties do we see burrowing in the earth! What mighty energies expending their strength in follies, indifferent to eternal realities! What attention devoted to fables, and denied to awful facts! How many losing a soul for eternity, in settling a date in time!

A man standing by the crater of the groaning and heaving volcano—a woman holding her babe, and laughing with maniac revelry amid the converging flames of her furniture

and spurning away the fire-escape—the sea man catching fish, while his vessel sinks inch by inch in the abyss of waters—are but faint representations of the insanity of him who, unconcerned about his soul, engages in all pursuits and indulges in all pleasures, with an eternity of responsibility rolling onward on the spot on which he stands, like a vast Atlantic sea. And since insanity ends in suicide, what else is deliberate rejection of life? The unbelieving perish by their own hands. Theirs, too, is insanity without its irresponsibility. They show the folly of the maniac, while they incur the guilt of the criminal.

Reader, review your state: consider your ways: ponder the paths of your feet. Fully, and fairly, and patiently weigh the facts, and reasonings, and illustrations contained in the following pages, and God himself direct you to a just, a true, and unchangeable conviction.

IS CHRISTIANITY FROM GOD?



CHAPTER I.

IS THE SOUL IMMATERIAL AND IMMORTAL?

THIS is a useful though not an essential preliminary investigation. We therefore attempt to throw a little light on it. Christianity is the religion of inquiry, as well as the subject of triumphant proof. It does not demand our assent to propositions without any previous examination of their character and their claims. Its language is—Search, examine, judge ye, whether these things be so or not.

Our first is simply a preliminary inquiry—it is the immortality, or after-existence, of the soul of man. If there be no hereafter—no reckoning at the judgment-morn—no destiny in the future, dependent upon character created in the present—then the claims of the Gospel to be a revelation from God are of comparatively trivial moment. If, when we die, and the green turf is laid upon us, our

eyes are destined to open on no hereafter, nor our hearts to throb again, then the truth or the falsity of Christianity, except so far as it touches this, is an insignificant inquiry.

The *materiality* or *immateriality* of the soul does not vitally affect the question of its hereafter existence. I am convinced, and I think I shall be able to convince the reader, that the soul is *immaterial*; but if it were shown satisfactorily by physiologists that the soul of man is a *material* substance, that would not prove that the soul is not immortal. God might be pleased to endue matter with the attributes of immortality. He might be pleased to impress upon a material soul the capacity for a never ending or eternal hereafter. His *fiat* would be its inheritance of a never-ending existence. But I think I shall be able to prove, by a few plain and simple propositions, that the soul is not only *immortal*, but that it is also *immaterial*—that is, that it is not the same in substance as the body.

The favourite position of materialists, that is, those who deny its immateriality, is an analogy. They say that the mind grows and dies with the body—that the mind is *infantile* with the infant body,—full grown in the

adult, — wasted by disease, debilitated by age; and *therefore*, say they, it must be, as the natural sequence, annihilated by death. They maintain, that the analogy that subsists between the body and the soul, or the intimacy between the one and the other, is so entire, that we find at each step the mind and body going hand in hand in a common equi-progressive destiny, so that (I repeat the words,) the mind is infantile with the infant body, full grown in the adult, wasted by disease, debilitated by age; and therefore, they say, the presumption is, that it dies when the body dies.

Now, if they could substantiate the first four propositions, that the mind is *always* infantile in the infant, and *always* full grown in the adult, and *always* wasted by disease, and *always* debilitated by age, then the presumption would be that *most probably* it was *always* destroyed by death. But we can prove from facts, that the analogy does *not* hold good at every step; and one such proof is fatal to the whole. We find that the soul is *not always* wasted by disease. I myself have seen the soul possessed of masculine vigour, when the whole earthly tenement was on the verge of crumbling into

ruins. It is not true, also, that the soul is always debilitated by age. I have seen grey hairs and gathering infirmities of body encasing and yet unfolding a soul vigorous as in the meridian of life. Now if the analogy fail in *one* step, then the consequence deduced must fail also; for if it be true that the soul is only *sometimes* weakened by disease, and *sometimes* debilitated by age, then the only logical result they can reach by their argument is, that it is *sometimes* mortal and *sometimes* immortal, and therefore that there are two sorts of men, one class mortal and another immortal; which is what has been called by logicians a *reductio ad absurdum*. We therefore maintain, that this analogy, which some materialists glory in as a demonstration that the soul perishes with the body, does not hold good when we come fairly and impartially to investigate it.

Mind and body do not *always* sympathize together; that is, the one may be a sufferer, and the other not.

It has been found that paralysis has unnerved and unstrung the whole system, and yet the mind of man has remained unscathed. I will quote a case; that of the celebrated, the witty, and the clever diplomatist, Talley-

rand. His body was in the most wretched, miserable, diseased and distressed condition one can conceive; and yet the subtlety, and the wisdom, and the skill, and the talent, and the penetration of that diplomatist are allowed to have remained to his last moments unequalled. I may also refer to the celebrated Dean Swift. It was said, that before he died his body was a moving tomb; and yet his mind was as vigorous as in his earlier years. It is stated, in the forty-third number of the *Quarterly Review*, that Morgagni and Haller, distinguished continental anatomists, have ascertained that in one instance or another every part of the brain has been found destroyed or disorganized, and yet the individuals have none of them been deprived of mind, or affected in what has been thought the corresponding intellectual powers. I do not say, that in any one case the whole of the brain has been found disorganized or destroyed, but in one instance or another they have found it so with each part successively, and yet none of those individuals had lost any of their moral, intellectual, or mental powers. And if it can thus be shown, that this very organ, the brain, in which some craniologists are pleased to lodge the mental facul-

ties of man, has been more or less destroyed without any of his affections or intellectual energies being injured, it is proof positive that something more than the mere brain is that which constitutes his claim to be a mental and a moral being. But when anatomists have analysed the brain, what have they found? Let us hear. Some have said, that they trace all mental phenomena to a portion called the *pineal gland*. Now anatomists and chemists have analysed it; and what do you think is it made of? Phosphate of lime. And will phosphate of lime originate the splendid dramas of Shakspeare, or the epic poems of Milton, or the Iliad of Homer, or the poems of Virgil? Monstrous absurdity! It is quite plain, that there must be some agent prior and extraneous to the brain, which acts upon the brain, and thereby upon the physical system of man.

I stated, at the outset of my remarks, that the physiologist asserts that the mind is infantile with the body in the child, vigorous in the adult, weakened by disease, debilitated by age, and therefore destroyed by death. Now I would just invert this.

I would say that the *body* is infantile, not the mind in the child. Have you not ob

served (what is a remarkable practical lesson) that the child has thoughts and fears and feelings which it is not able to express by its bodily organs? Hence the remark made by parents, that the child knows much more than you suppose; and when we look at the attention, the listening looks, and the rivetted notice that a child gives to what is going on, we are convinced that he knows a great deal more than he generally gets credit for. Hence it may be seen that children grow up with impressions upon their minds that we cannot account for. The fact is, that at the time their infant bodies gave no intimation of what was going on in the inner sanctuary of the soul, their maturer minds were drinking in the habits and principles of those around them. I maintain, therefore, that in the child the mind is greater than the body—not that the body is equal to or greater than the mind. And I would therefore reverse the position materialists glory in, and say that the *body* of the child is infantile, while its mind is possessed of attributes far greater than is usually thought.

We admit a close *intimacy* between mind and matter, between the soul and the body,

but we deny *identity*. And I think I can prove this.

We shall find, for instance, that if we take so much of opium or so much of alcohol into the body, the *mind*, from its intimacy with the body, will be affected by it; that is, by sympathy. We shall find also, that if we take into the mind so much anger, so much jealousy, so much hatred, so much love, so much passion, the body will, from its intimacy with the mind, be affected by it; and this proves intimacy. But if the *material* stimuli of opium or alcohol require a *material* medium through which to act, surely the *moral* stimuli of jealousy and love and passion must, by parity of reasoning, require a *moral* medium, the soul, through which they can act upon the body. I do think that this position is positively irrefragable—viz. that the fact that physical stimuli require a physical agent through which to act upon the mind, warrants us in concluding that moral stimuli require a moral agent through which to act upon the body, and therefore that there must be a part that is *immaterial*, *moral*, and *intellectual*.

We do not deny, that if the brain become greatly diseased, mania or madness has fre-

quently ensued ; but this does not prove that the brain is the soul. Suppose I single out the best musician that ever touched an instrument, and take him to a piano, or an organ, or a violin, or any other instrument of music, out of tune, and bid him play. He tries to produce the notes he knows, but neither melody nor harmony is poured forth. Why? Not because the musician's *mind* has lost its power, or the musician's fingers have lost their skill ; but because the instrument on which he acts is out of tune. Now it is just so with the brain. When a man is seized with mania or madness, it is not because the *soul* has become disorganized or destroyed, but because the *instrument* is out of tune and disarranged. In fact, the soul is the master musician ; and the brain is but the instrument, through which that master musician acts—in tones, in looks, in sympathies, and by the senses—upon the world that is around.

In the next place, it is said by physiologists—If there be a soul, we ought to be able to detect and show it to all who choose to look on it.

Now this seems to me a most extraordinary conclusion. The very definition that

we give of the soul (that it is immaterial) would be sufficient reason why we should not be able to detect it. The physiologist is so accustomed to material anatomy, that he always imagines that a thing does not exist, unless he can show it on the point of his lancet. But if this be his only criterion of existence, he must be very sceptical in many things. Can he show an *idea* upon the point of his lancet? Can he show a *thought* on the point of his scalpel? It can therefore be no good reason for denying the existence of the soul, that he cannot mechanically detect it.

But we allege that we have clearer evidence of the existence of mind, than we have of the existence of matter. This may seem strange; but it is true. Berkeley, the bishop of Cloyne, a distinguished and excellent man, maintained that there was no such thing as matter—that there are merely certain sensations or impressions made by God upon the brain, which give us the notion of matter—and that we live in a world, not of matter, but of universal idealism. Absurd as it may appear, one must be surprised at the ingenious arguments with which he contends for the non-existence of matter. But

though he could reason away matter, he could not thus reason himself out of the existence of *mind*. For the very fact that a man *doubts* and *reasons*, is a proof that there is a doubting and reasoning faculty. The very doubt establishes our position, that there is a mind, or a soul, or an immaterial faculty, capable of doubting.

Physiologists or materialists (not all physiologists, but those of them who are materialists) say that the *brain* is the mind—that it alone is the soul—and that in fact they can trace every thing to the brain as the ultimum of sensation and thought, but no further.

Now I admit the fact, that we can trace sensation and thought to the brain; but I will show you that we can go a step further and trace it *beyond* it. For instance; we are in the habit of saying that the eye sees; but *the eye* cannot see; it is the mere instrument of vision, it is no more to man than a telescope or a microscope beautifully constructed, and if the eye is diseased, then sight is destroyed. I take a step further; I allege that if *the optic nerve* is diseased, then though the eye may be as perfect as God ever created it, yet I cannot see. I go

still a step further ; it has been found, that if *the brain* be diseased or pressed upon in a certain part, then though the optic nerve and the eye remain sound, there is no sight. But now I will go a step further. A letter or newspaper is brought by the postman to an individual ; he reads it, and the result of reading it has been that the man has dropped down dead. Why this ? No physical weapon touched him. It was *a purely mental idea*, that acted upon the brain, and the brain acted upon the nervous system, and the man died because the letter contained some fearful or disastrous tidings. Or again, one friend calls upon another, and says that some great catastrophe has happened to his nearest and dearest relative, and we find that instances have occurred of the man instantly losing his sight, or his hearing, or being paralysed. Here it was a moral fact, that struck the man with physical effects. The mind or mental power acted on the brain ; that acted on the nerves ; and they acted on the senses. And thus while the materialist traces all to the brain, we show that we can go a step further—and prove the existence of a being above the brain, an *agent* that acts upon the brain,

and, in short, that the brain is the mere agent of that being that dwells in the immaterial sanctuary, inviolate within.

Materialists have admitted (indeed all must admit) that the body of man undergoes a complete change, some say every seven, some every twelve, some every twenty years. Suppose now, to avoid anything like controversy, we say every *twenty* years—that every particle in man's physical system is transferred and removed from him every twenty years. Then if a man live to the age of sixty, it can be demonstrated that he has had actually three bodies in the course of those sixty years. Every particle in his body has been changed, and supplanted by another particle. This is admitted. Now if the mind of man is material, and be the body, and of the body, then it must have undergone corresponding changes; and therefore in every twenty years a man's consciousness must have changed, and he must have no recollection, or personal identity, no conviction that at sixty years of age he is the same person that he was forty years ago. Now what an absurdity is this! We know that the body has undergone this transmutation of parts; but we have a feel-

ing and consciousness of personal identity, by which we are thoroughly convinced that we are each the same person, that we have each the same peculiarity of temper, of disposition, of feeling, of love, of hatred, of happiness, that we are the same in all substantial respects as we were twenty years ago. And therefore we maintain, that as the materialist cannot show that man's mind changes every twenty years, he cannot show that it is (as he alleges) material.

It is admitted by materialists, that matter is infinitely divisible, or at least that it is divisible into parts. Thus you speak of a foot of deal, or an inch of oak, or a yard of rope, or of cable, or of chain. Now if man's mind be material, the same as the body, as the materialist alleges, then it ought to be perfectly good sense and good grammar to speak of an *inch* of anger, of a *foot* of jealousy, or of *yards* of passion; the very statement of which so revolts all men's feelings, and seems so ridiculous, that it needs only to be mentioned, to provoke the refutation it deserves.

Materialists have said that we find this fact illustrating their proposition—that the mind seems to repose, and sleep, and enjoy

quiescence along with the body. They quote the case of individuals sleeping at night. "We see," they say, "that the mind is weary and worn out with the brain, and that it courts and enjoys repose along with the body; and therefore it is part and parcel of the material frame."

Now I rather question the ground of this position. At all events one fact to the contrary would shake their argument that it is always so. There is no individual in the world, who has not been conscious of dreaming. That one fact shows, that the body may be in a state of repose, while the mind is in the exercise of unshackled activity. And I am conscious that the mind is frequently in a state of more active and vigorous exercise during sleep, than it was in waking hours. I believe that the mind never sleeps, and that at every moment every individual's mind is active.

But the physiologist says, If the mind never sleeps, why then do we not recollect in the morning what we dreamed in the night? Now I ask, do you recollect, when you sit down at night, all the thoughts that passed through your mind in the day-time? You do not. You know that ten thousand thoughts

have passed through your mind this day, which you cannot recollect and enumerate this night. And may it not be—(nay, is it not so?)—that ten thousand thoughts, brighter and better than of earth, pass through your mind in the hours of sleep, which you cannot recollect in the morning? I am conscious that I have preached far better sermons in sleep than ever I did in the pulpit; and I have composed far better commentaries upon God's word, and have been conscious of it too, in my sleep, than when sitting in my study. And I believe many an individual has been conscious in sleep of brilliant thoughts, that would make his name memorable as Milton's if he could only embody and give utterance to them in his waking hours. This statement therefore that the mind is invariably in a state of quiescence and repose along with the body, is not borne out by the general experience of mankind.

Let it be recollected that every thing which the materialist or the physiologist has detected in man, has been the subject of analysis. I have said that one portion of man's brain has been analysed: but so has every part. The nerves in man's system, the brain in his head, have been subjected to the an-

alysis of the chemists; and they can tell you of what they all are composed. To explain mind, it has been suggested, that galvanism or electricity is the source of the nervous influence of the human system. Now if we can thus find out all the component parts of the human system, and ascertain the secrets of nervous sensibility, then the question is, are any of those parts, or is any collocation or excitement of them, adequate to produce thoughts? Would all the galvanism or electricity in the world produce a single book of the *Æneid* of Virgil, or a single page of the *Paradise Lost* of Milton? If mere galvanic influence is the source of thought, then it would follow, that if you could impart to a brute animal a greater quantity of galvanic power, you would raise him nearer to the dignity of a man; and if you could impart to the greatest fool or the veriest idiot, a greater quantity of electricity, you would raise him and might bring him to the height of a Homer or a Milton. But this is felt to be absurd. And can we then suppose, that a quantity of matter acted on by this galvanic influence, is all that is meant by mind—that that can regulate and produce the splendid discoveries of the age—that can construct

a ship of war, a steam vessel, a railroad, or any of those discoveries that stamp this as an age of great and unparalleled progress in human knowledge, and in physical science? No, the very statement of the thing is enough to demonstrate its absurdity and untenableness.

It has been held by some materialists, that *the race* is perpetual, but that the *individuals* of the race are perishable ; that is, that while the human race is perpetual, and having begun in time, generation shall be perpetuated after generation *ad æternum*, the *individuals* who make up the generations, or the component parts, are all perishable, and disappear. They quote, as instances and illustrations, the beasts of the field, and the trees of the forest. Take a tree, they say, the apple tree for instance ; it grows up from a little seed, it bears its leaves and blossoms, and its fruit, and then it dies, and afterwards other apple trees come up, and so each *apple tree* perishes, but the genus or species of apple trees is perpetual through all centuries.

Now, if there were a perfect parallel between the *tree* and *its* uses and *its* destiny, and *man* and *his* uses and *his* destiny, this position would be tenable. But if we look

closer at the subject, we shall find there is no parallel. In the first place, when the apple tree has produced its blossoms, and borne its fruit, and spread forth its boughs, it has done all it was meant to accomplish, and then it dies and disappears. But when man has made his noblest steps in knowledge, in triumph over sin, in victory over temptation, instead of having achieved his end, he has only risen one step higher, in order to prepare him for rising to another—and when he has reached that, for rising to another still. In short, eternity, boundlessness and progression are the elements of man; while time and the material world are the elements of the tree. Until man is perfect as God is perfect, acquainted with science, and wisdom, and experience, even as God is, he has not attained to the ultimatum of his power, and the end of his being: and therefore the parallel does not hold good. Nor does it hold good in another respect. For if the tree were allowed infinite and boundless progress, it would rise so high, and spread its branches so wide, that it would overshadow too much of the world,—it would absorb all the nutritious juices of the earth, and there would be no space nor room for the growth

and expansion of other trees quite as useful and necessary to man ; and therefore its endless expansion and growth would be most mischievous. But we find the reverse true of man's soul. The more he discovers, the larger sphere he opens up for other discoveries to follow ; the more he masters in knowledge, in science, in virtue, in piety, in righteousness, instead of taking up the ground that ought to be occupied by others, he strikes out new spheres for others to occupy—new paths for others to walk in—new room for the expansion of the intellectual and moral power of those around him. So that while the tree, by endless progression, would absolutely encumber the system to which it belongs, man, by endless progression, instead of overshadowing and excluding, rather creates greater room for others, and furnishes fresh scope for the development of their intellectual powers and moral grandeur ; so that in this respect also the comparison does not hold good between man and the tree. It fails too in another respect. With the brute of the field, *the present* is every thing. If we take a dog, for instance ; he has no recollection—at least no recollection of any of the facts, the transactions, the principles, the doings, or the great

sensations of the past; nor has he any anticipation of the future whatever. *The present* is every thing with the dumb animals. But with man memory is the treasury and the storehouse of ten thousand things that are past; and he has within him a power of anticipation, that still strives and stretches onward and away to things that are future. While the *present* makes up the entire happiness of the dog, the *past* and the *future* are the great sources and fountains of the happiness of man. Therefore the destruction of the dog is no loss to him. The present is all; and when he is extinguished he loses nothing. But if *man* be annihilated, he loses all the past treasures he has accumulated, and he forgoes all the bright joys he anticipates for the future. The annihilation of his soul is a catastrophe too big for human imagination to conceive, too horrible for the human mind to look to. When the apple tree has withered, and all its branches and its boughs have been dissolved, they do not perish; the constituent parts of it, when reduced to powder, are fertile nutriment to the earth, and are absorbed into it, and are reproduced in other shapes. It may appear in the shape of another apple-tree; it dies, it is cut down, and

is resolved into dust ; and in the next century it may appear in the form of the blooming rose, or in the shape of the fragrant violet. It is not annihilated ; it merely experiences a change of form and of development, a transmigration of substance. But this will not hold good of man. If man's soul should be thus reduced, it cannot become thus revived. Why ? Because my consciousness never can be another man's ; my feelings, my hopes, my prospects, my personal identity, never can be another man's. I can give away my money ; I can give my knowledge ; I can give my very limbs, my life ; but I cannot give away that consciousness of personal identity, which constitutes *me*. It is inalienable from me ; it must either be extinguished altogether, or perpetuated in myself. So that whilst the destruction of the tree is only the preparation of that tree for other forms of existence, and perhaps more beautiful forms, the destruction of my soul must by the necessity of the case be utter annihilation. It never can be transmigration, or transfer to any other. We say, therefore, that the supposed analogy between the rational and the animal or vegetable creation, in this, that the race is perpetual, but that the indi-

viduals of the race perish, is a position that cannot be held.

But I appeal for evidence to men's innermost feelings. I have given many plain and intelligible statements; but there are proofs superior to the reasoning and the subtlety of human logic. Reader, go to the grave of a departed father or a friend. It will there be seen, that man's feelings and common sense are mightier and more overwhelming than any logic; and when you look on the grave of the near and the dear, is there not something that tells you that you are not parted for ever? Is there not a wish springing up in your heart from mysterious depths, that impresses on you the thought that you shall meet again? Who implanted that wish? Why are we capable of it? When the dog sees a dog buried, he has no such feeling; when the ox sees an ox slain, he has no such expectancy. Why is it that MAN, when he looks upon the pale face of departed relationship, has a wish—and not only a wish, an impression—nay, more, a conviction that cannot be erased—that they shall meet again? Has God implanted this lingering longing after immortality, but implanted this wish, and made us capable of this feeling

only to tantalize and to taunt us? Impossible! This would be worse than the treatment of the fabled Tantalus, of whom it is alleged in mythology, that when the cup of cooling water was placed near his lips, the moment he tried to drink it, it departed, aggravating his torment year after year. If God has made us with this strong wish, this yearning after immortality, only to tantalize us, and to snatch from us the cup of life at the moment we are about to drink of it, surely that God cannot be the good, the kind, the loving God, that even nature and nature's voice proclaim Him to be.

When man has overcome, and possessed, and appropriated all that is in the universe, there is yet something in man that will not allow him to be satisfied. His soul's vast appetences are not met. It yearns for satisfaction still.

I think Alexander the Great presents, in one instance of his life, a most impressive proof of the greatness, if not the immortality of the soul. You are aware, that that monarch overran the whole earth, and subdued every nation; and at the conclusion of universal victory, what did he say? "Now that I have gained the whole world, that

object of ten thousand individuals, that wish of ten thousand hearts, I am satisfied ?” No, Alexander the Great had something more in him, though he knew it not ; he sat down, that monarch, that mighty conqueror—and wept like a child, because he had not another world to conquer ! The world could not fill his mind, nor would it fill a babe’s. We read also of a Roman emperor, who had run the round of all the pleasures of the world, offering a rich reward to any one who should discover a new pleasure ; as if to teach us, that when all the sweets of the world have been tasted, and all the contents of the world have been subdued and possessed, man’s soul, unsatisfied with its material possessions, thirsts and longs for something nobler brighter, greater, and better, than the world itself.

Again, if there be no hereafter, how are we to account for those thoughts, vaster than the earth, that spring up in every one’s mind, and of which every one is more or less conscious ?

Is it not true, that thoughts, more glorious than any thing that the world can furnish, do occasionally leap from our hearts, like angels too bright and too beautiful for earth ? Is it not true, that we just catch from astronomy,

what is sufficient to excite our curiosity, to know more of its brilliant and ever burning orbs, and the more we know, the more still we strive and thirst to know? Is it not true, that we form at times conceptions of human excellence, ideas of loveliness and moral worth, that never have been, and never can be realized on earth? What are all these? They are presentiments of heaven—harbingers of immortality—voices, crying even “in the wilderness” of the materialist’s heart, that man is not to perish with the brute. They proclaim, in tones too distinct to be misunderstood, that there will come a time, when all those stars which he has imperfectly seen shall be stretched out before him, like isles upon the ocean of infinitude—when all those ideas of excellence—those thirstings after perfection—those aspirations after joy and peace, shall be satisfied from the river of God, which flows from the throne of God, and of the Lamb for ever and ever.

Progression is the order of all that we see in the world; and this furnishes a presumption of our immortality.

A striving after something that is above it, is the order and the characteristic of every created thing. Take the lowest form of this;

take the metal in its ore. Look at those crystals, that appear upon the copper or the silver ore; they are just the striving of that substance, to reach the next grade of excellence, the vegetable product. If we turn to the flower, the tree, and the fruit, as for instance the sensitive plant, we find vegetable presenting the foreshadow and striving after animal life. And if we go to animal life, we find some creatures treading upon the very heels of man, and striving to reach his dignity and glory. And when we come to man, is all this to be arrested? Is *he* to be an exception and an anomaly in the noblest analogies of the universe? Is he to be a petrification? We know that it is not so. We know and feel, that from being mortal here, he shall be immortal hereafter—his body only dissolved in the dust, or laid in the silent grave. He shall see another day, a day (to leave the paths of human reasoning, and have recourse to the inspiration of God,) “when they that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

I have given you all the reasons I could

collect. They are not wholly original; they are gathered in the course of reading. They are facts and reasons which I submit to you; and I conceive that, when we lay them together, and weigh and consider them, they amount to a moral presumption the most overwhelming, that man's soul shall live hereafter—that when God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” He gave him an immortal soul.

If we appeal to Revelation, the matter is soon ended. There the intimations are plain. But all that I have shown you is, how far *nature* will go. And I trust I shall be able to show, that we can prove from nature also, that there is a God; and by and by, that the Bible is a book sent from that God—the intimations of which are the intimations of truth.

CHAPTER II.

DOES CREATION PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF GOD ?

Does creation evidence a God? It does ; but on this subject I must make a preliminary distinction. It is this ; *an atheist* there may be, but *an anti-theist* there cannot possibly be. That is to say, a man may declare that he does not find any evidence that satisfies him of the existence of a God, but no man may dare to say absolutely, there is not a God. The former, is merely the expression of that individual's necessarily most limited, imperfect, and restricted experience : but the latter proposition would imply, that the individual had soared among the stars, and ransacked the contents of the worlds that are there—that he had descended to the caves of the ocean, and explored the unknown treasures and stores that are there—that he had travelled through the mines and strata of the earth, and explored the hidden recesses, and depths, and mysteries there—that, in short, he had been in time past possessed of omnipresence and of omniscience, and in the ex-

ercise of two attributes of Deity, had not discovered a God. The fact is, such an individual must be himself God, in order to be in a position to announce the proposition—There is not a God.

This distinction is most important. All which the atheist can say is, “I do not find proofs of a God ;” and this depends upon the sagacity of his mind—upon the extent of his survey—upon the honesty of his researches, and the continuity of his application, and is at the best a very venturous and precarious announcement. But no man can declare, “There is *not* a God ;” because such a declaration would imply that the individual making it is omniscient, for if there be one star that studs the firmament unexplored by him, that star may be the lesson-book that proclaims the existence of a God ; and if there be one corner in the boundlessness of infinitude, unexamined, it may disclose a God ; and therefore, until the individual has swept the illimitable recesses of space, he cannot sit down and declare there is *not* a God.

I may also observe that the atheist is not to be blamed because he has not found out the existence of God ; but he is to be blamed if, having powers fitted to investigate—if,

having facts submitted for collocation—if, having evidence pressed upon his judgment, and his conscience—he refuses to examine, and concludes in wilful and obstinate ignorance that he cannot find a God. And the charge that will be adduced against such a man at the judgment bar will not be that he was ignorant of God, but that he would not give himself the trouble to examine whether there was a God or not.

In the next place, the very fact that the existence of a God is probable, or even *possible*, ought to awaken in every reflecting being the most strenuous and the most persevering efforts to know if there be that God. Shall I every hour be the recipient of innumerable mercies—shall I every day enjoy blessings countless as the sands upon the sea shore—and shall there never arise in my mind one solitary question, if there be a Fountain, and who is the Fountain of those mercies? Shall I make no search after the Hand that bestows them, nor try to reach the ocean fulness from which they continually emanate? Shall I take the gift, and live in wilful ignorance of the good Giver? There will, therefore, in the atheist, be not only the great guilt of not having searched and ex-

amined whether there be a God, but there will be the great ingratitude of never having tried to ascertain the fountain of those blessings, that he reaps and realizes every day.

The first statement that has been made by way of objection to the existence of a God, is that adduced by Hume, Mirabeau, and Voltaire—that it is as rational to suppose that the earth is eternal, as to suppose that there is a Maker of it, who is eternal in its stead. It is just as rational, say they, to presume that the earth has the attribute of eternal existence, as that there is a God who made the earth, and who has that attribute.

Now we maintain, in opposition to this most extravagant suggestion, that there are very powerful proofs that the earth is not eternal, but on the other hand, no proofs that there is not an eternal God, who made it. And the proofs that the earth is not eternal, are very short and simple.

We do not deny that the raw material of which the earth is formed may have existed millions of years. We do not deny that the rocks and the dust, of which the earth is composed, may be ten, twenty, or thirty thousand years old; but what we assert is, that the *present collocation*, disposition and

arrangement of all that is upon the surface and in the subsoil of the earth, bears most decisive proof that the world as it is, is not older than the Mosaic record declares it to be.*

To prove this, we need only refer to the limited range of history. Here is a fact we can all examine. We have nothing like authentic history older than four thousand years. The Chinese have their mythology, and their wild and romantic legends; but it can be shown by internal evidence, that the documents of the Chinese are absurd and contradictory, and that instead of that nation being older than the age of the antediluvian patriarchs, it is not older than 2,500 or 3,000 years at the utmost.

Another proof of the recent collocation of the earth is deduced from a consideration of the progress and the expansive force of population. There are millions of miles upon the surface of the earth not yet peopled; but if the earth had been twenty thousand years or thirty thousand years old, the presumption is that it would have been covered with a population which it would

* See Buckland's *Bridgewater Treatise*.

be scarcely adequate to maintain. Instead of that, if the earth should last other five thousand years, and the ratio of population should proceed as it has done, it would still be abundantly adequate to accommodate and support all its children upon its surface.

In the next place, the progress of science seems presumptive evidence, that the earth is not above four or five thousand years old. It is only within the last three hundred years, that the most brilliant discoveries in science have been made—that the most important productions in poetry, history, and chronology have been brought to light, or created by the master-spirits of the world in which we live.

If we take these facts—the fact that we have no authentic history older than three or four thousand years—the fact that the population of the earth has not yet covered one-half of it—and the fact that science and literature bear upon their brows the proofs and demonstrations of childhood, I think the presumption is overwhelming, that the earth in its present collocation is not older than the Mosaic record represents it to be. It is contrary to reason to suppose the earth to be eternal. It is rational to believe it the crea-

tion of God, and evidence, therefore, of his existence.

There is a fact that has been brought to light by modern geologists, which demonstrates the *interposition*, just as the earth proves the *existence*, of God. It has been found that the ocean and the earth seem (more or less) in various places to have interchanged their localities; and it has been found moreover, on examining the successive strata that appear in the once depths of the ocean and beneath the surface of the present dry land, that there are fossil remains of whole races of animals that have become extinct at once, and of new races of animals that must have started or been called into being. There are successive strata, in which we shall find fossil remains of animals, to which we have no successors in living creatures at present upon the face of the earth; and at the time those animals must have been destroyed, new races, not one trace of which is to be found in the previous strata, must have started into being. Now the question is, How did the new race come into existence on the ruins of the old? It is clear that the fossil races now found in the strata of the earth were destroyed as by an instant-

neous stroke, and that the new races were next and no less suddenly originated and called into existence; this is perfectly ascertained: then the question is, How did the new races come into existence? In the first place, naturalists admit, that no fermentation or chemical process with which we are acquainted, can originate organic and animal life. In the second place, all are agreed that there is no such thing as the running into each other of different and distinct races of animals. The mule, for instance, is the first and last link of his race; he does not transmit the same species. If there be no possibility of life from chemical processes, if no blending and intermingling of races of animals, then it follows that if whole races were overwhelmed (the remains of which may now be seen in the British Museum), and if new races immediately afterwards started into being, there was a fresh interposition of almighty and creative power at the origination of a new race, and thus far a proof of a God. And thus the facts that have been discovered by modern geologists, and laid down and expounded so perspicuously by Dr. Buckland, prove in the simplest and most satisfactory manner that there is a God

—a living and acting God, interposing at successive periods of the world, to create and originate new races of living and organized beings. This proof of the existence of a God alone has appeared to many most decisive.

If we look at the present arrangement of matter, we are constrained to confess the presence of DESIGN, and this would show that a Designer exists.

For instance ; if the stars had been placed more distant from each other than they actually are, or if they were possessed of greater density, or if they moved with greater velocity, there would be a jar and an interruption in that glorious harmony which ancient poets have noticed as the music of the spheres and of the solemn heavens. Is there no design or arrangement manifest in this ?

If we look at the mechanism of man's body, we shall find it a perfect optimism ; that is to say, nothing can be added to it, to render it more adapted to the sphere in which it is to live, and nothing can be withdrawn from it, without leaving it less fitted for the uses for which it is required. If we look at the five senses of man, we can see evident tokens of design. In the order of the way

in which he is led to his daily sustenance, we see design. First of all, man *looks* at an object; and by looking at a thing, no contagion can pass from the object to the man; after he has looked at it, and the eye has pronounced it good, he then *touches* it, and the fingers are so formed that contagion is not easily communicated through them; after he has looked at it and touched it, he then *smells* it; and after this last sense has pronounced a favourable verdict, he then *tastes* it. Thus you see, that the sense that is most remote from risk is called into play in the first instance; and the sense that is most easily affected is brought into exercise when the prior and less easily injured senses have all been satisfied. Now I ask, if here are not evident marks of design; and if of design, of a living God, who so designed it?

If it should be said, that all this, and all the exquisite anatomy both of men and of animals, is a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and that it is by mere chance that either are so constructed, then we ask—If it be true that chance has originated all, how is that we never find the presence of the blunders incident to chance? Do we ever find the horse accidentally with wings? Do we ever find

the elephant with feathers? Do we ever find the bird with four feet instead of two? Do we ever find a centaur in fact as in fable? Never. Yet if chance had originated all, there would surely have been occasional deviations of this kind from the wonderful adaptation and harmony which we every where behold. In no instance do we find such blunders, such proofs of fortuitous concurrence; in every instance all is beautifully, skilfully, and regularly made.

If we refer to the eye of man, we shall find in it one of the most beautiful proofs of design one can possibly investigate. It is well known, indeed, that the finest discoveries in optics are all approximations only to the perfection that is already displayed in the eye of man. By a power peculiar to itself, the eye is at once a microscope capable of examining the most minute things, and a telescope capable of seeing the most distant things; and this power of adaptation, by a contractile and dilating energy peculiarly its own, is given to no other material substance in the universe.

If we examine the bones of the human body, what striking proofs do they present of design and of the existence of a God!—

The spine, for instance, is so made, that while it is the canal of life, it can bend backward or forward, and each bone will move to the right or to the left upon its socket, without risk. The head is so constructed that we can turn it to the left or to the right, bend it forward or bend it backward, almost move it round, and yet the bones upon which it moves, with their various joints, surrounding and encasing a substance so delicate that to touch it with a pin point would extinguish life, are so strong, that they can bear three or four hundred pounds weight. Strength, variety of use and action, and elegance, are all concentrated here. Can all this be the result of chance? Such chance would only be another name for a wise and benevolent God.

If we examine a bird of the air, the traces of design are no less obvious. The feathers are most mathematically formed. Let me illustrate this: a pound of iron may be formed into a rod in two ways. Let us suppose it is to be formed into a rod exactly three feet in length. It may be either a solid rod, or it may be a hollow cylinder, thicker, though hollow, and still three feet long. Now it is found by experience, that the hollow rod is much stronger than the solid; this fact

enables us to combine lightness and strength. Now the quill ends of the feathers of birds are all made upon this principle. They thus contain the maximum of strength with the minimum of weight; and so admirably adapted and adjusted to their purpose, that none but a designing God could have made them so.

Let me allude to another illustration of design—the mole—a creature perhaps the least known and the least examined, though no creature gives more evidence of design in its structure. If you examine its covering, you find it has a fur, exceedingly short, but so close that the dust through which it passes cannot permeate it, and so dense and smooth, as well as close, that the warmth which it retains from flying off must be very great. If you look to its head, you find a bony cartilage, evidently made for boring, and essential to its operations as a miner. You find the eyes singularly small; so much so, that the common saying is, that the mole has no eyes at all, in order not to be inconvenienced in its operations. It has a short and strong neck, muscular and powerful fore feet. It is adapted with infinite exactness to its work. Now what does all this indicate? That it is

unquestionably fitted and meant for subterraneous excavations—to be the miner in our fields: the very creature and with the very habits which all natural history ascribes to it. Now I ask again, can all this be chance? Can a fortuitous concourse of atoms have originated such an exquisite piece of mechanism—a creature so admirably adapted for all the habits by which it was to be characterized? Wisdom, and foresight, and design, are transparent in all this.

If we refer to the tribes of the sea, we find additional proofs of design. For instance, a certain amount of warmth is requisite to produce fishes from the eggs that the parent fish leaves on the ocean and on the rivers. Hence we find, the fresh water fish deposits its eggs at the margin of the river, where the temperature is evidently warmest; the salt water fish deposits its eggs on the surface of the ocean, where the sun's rays most powerfully act; the crocodile deposits its eggs upon the warm sand, and buries them in it, in order to be hatched. Now these creatures cannot reason: they cannot enter into the mysteries of chemistry; they cannot solve a problem in mathematics; they cannot explain the phenomena of the material universe around

them; and yet they act with the skill and foresight with which the chemist and the naturalist would act, and embody in their instincts all the experience and knowledge attained by us during ten, twenty, or thirty years of study.

Let me quote another proof of design in the atmosphere around us. If there had been no atmosphere, man would have died the very moment that he was born into the world. If there had been no atmosphere, there could have been no sound; the sweet sounds of melody would be hushed—the harmonies of music would not be, and man would lose the exquisite joy that is to be derived from this elegant and beautiful accomplishment. If there had been no atmosphere, again, there would be no perceptible fragrance in the rose, nor sweetness in the perfume of the violet; there would be no possibility of escaping contagion through the intimations of the sense of smell pointing out its existence. Man's sense of smell would be a piece of useless apparatus, if there were no air to be the vehicle of the particles, sweet or otherwise, that act upon that sense. Not only so, but if there were no atmosphere, there could be scarcely any light. If the

atmosphere and its refracting power were utterly destroyed, we should then see the sun to be a luminary possessed of tremendous brilliancy, and pouring down his rays direct upon the eyes of every one that looked upon him, from a fountain focus. There would be no such thing as twilight in the morning, or twilight in the evening; but the brilliancy of meridian day would burst on man's eyes with dazzling and destructive effect, the moment he opened them upon the world. If there were no atmosphere to refract and reflect the rays that come from the sun, each ray of light would come with such velocity that it would destroy the sight. That effect is prevented only by the admirable adjustment of forces with which God has invested the sun and the atmosphere that we breathe.

In consequence of the existence of the atmosphere, there is a pressure upon a man's body of thousands of pounds weight; there is a pressure equal to fifteen pounds weight upon every square inch of the body of each individual present. Now how is this to be borne without the animal machine being crushed to pieces? There is a previous arrangement that there shall be small quanti-

ties of air in the internal parts of the body of man, which shall withstand that pressure, and make it to be unfelt and without pain. Here also is proof of design.

In the next place, if we look to the composition of the atmosphere, we see further and very striking proofs of design. The atmosphere is composed of two distinct gases, called oxygen and nitrogen gas; and the ratio of these is—twenty-one parts of oxygen to seventy-nine parts of nitrogen. Now both these gases are deleterious of themselves. No man could breathe oxygen without being rapidly destroyed; and no man could breathe nitrogen without being instantly poisoned. Moreover, if there were much more oxygen in the atmosphere than these twenty-one parts to seventy-nine, the whole system of man would be in a state of excitement that would soon terminate in death; and if there were a much greater proportion of nitrogen than these seventy-nine parts, man would be incapable of breathing the air. Then how is it, that we find the atmosphere composed of these two gases so exactly and exquisitely, and so maintained, that it is just the very atmosphere made for man's life, and man's lungs the very lungs that were made to

breathe man's atmosphere? A thousand forces go to disturb these proportions. Every creature that breathes the air absorbs the oxygen, and throws out at every respiration nitrogen and carbonic acid gas; and every fire that burns, and every lamp that is lighted, consumes the oxygen and gives out carbonic acid gas. How, then, does it come to pass, that with fires and lamps and millions of living creatures, men and cattle on a thousand hills, consuming the oxygen and pouring out carbonic acid gas in its stead, the atmosphere in course of years is not so deteriorated and vitiated that its proportions are altered, and it becomes unfit for man to respire? Why does not this very likely result happen? The beautiful provision, the effect of wise design, to obviate such a catastrophe, is this—whilst animals absorb oxygen and give out carbonic acid gas, all vegetable substances absorb carbonic acid gas, and give out oxygen. And thus we find the vegetable world and the animal world exactly counterbalancing each other; what is *poison* to the one, is the very *nutrition* and life of the other. Can this be chance? Must it not be the arrangement of a wise and designing God?

I call your attention to another and familiar proof of evident design, the home-born bee. The moment that this insect comes into existence, in the month of April or May or June (it may be), it begins to lay up a store, providing for the winter. Now how does it know that winter is to come? Who taught the bee, that it was to provide its treasures for a season when those treasures could not be found? It is an instinct evidently imparted by God with this design.

It was necessary that the bee should treasure up the greatest quantity of honey in the least possible space. Now mark how this is arranged. There are three bodies (and only three) that can be placed close together without leaving any interstices; these are the *perfect square*, the *equilateral triangle*, and the *hexahedron*, or six-sided figure. No other forms can be placed together without some interstices being left. And the third, the hexahedron, is at once the strongest and the most capacious. Now how remarkable it is, that the bee has chosen the hexahedron, and that every comb in a hive of bees is that which contains the greatest amount of honey in the least possible space, and leaves no interstices!—Kepler, the mathematician, cal-

culated the angle that must be at the bottom of the cell, in order to ascertain what would be the best to form the base of a hexahedron comb, the most capacious and most fitted for juxtaposition with others; and the very demonstration which mathematical calculation proved, is exactly realized in every comb we find in a bee-hive. We have therefore in the bee and in the hive, and in all the exquisite adjustments by which they are characterized, the traces of palpable design—the evidences of an existing and a wise God.

So then, if we look upward to the sky, and behold the sun and moon and stars all gloriously arranged and harmoniously moving together, we are constrained to exclaim with the psalmist—"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handywork." If we look around us on the earth—on its hills, its vales, its feathered, its breathing, and its animated tenantry—we are constrained to acknowledge that a wise, an infinitely wise God must have planned and originated all. If we look into the ocean, which would instantly become stagnant were it not for its incessant tides—if we look to the atmosphere, which would be the fountain of pollution and the vehicle of

miasma, were it not for the air-currents awakened by the sun—we are constrained to confess, that ocean's caves contain the traces of a God, that the broad bosom of the ground on which we tread bears all the traces of the footsteps of a God, and that the blazing sun and glorious stars, all in dumb but expressive eloquence, tell to us—There is a God ; and that God how wise, how great, how good !

If, after we have looked at the exterior world, and at man's body, that microcosm of wonders, we come to his mind, we shall find the equal proofs of infinite wisdom and of exquisite design, and therefore of a God who thus designed ; design necessarily implying a designer. If man were only possessed of the five senses to which we have referred, but had no intellectual powers of recollection and memory such as we now find, it would come to pass that as long as the husband beheld his wife, he would recognize her, but would cease the instant she retired, to have any recollection of her ; and if the father had nothing but his five senses, he would recognize his children while they were present, but the moment that distance, oceans and miles intervened, he would wholly forget their appear-

ance. But to obviate this, there is placed in man's bosom an intellectual faculty called the memory, at once the most wonderful and the most powerful. It can treasure in its capacious cells the recollections of threescore and ten, yea, of a thousand years; it can bring before us at once, and with the magic of a wish, paintings and persons, and scenes and landscapes, which it would take a hundred thousand square miles to contain, if they were all laid down on paper before us. The daguerreotype is but a faint approximation of this stupendous power, that can conjure up from the distance, at the moment it is desired, the scenes, the events, the persons and the transactions of years and generations past. We can deposit in its stupendous depths countenances and landscapes, chronological events and facts and occurrences: and they are so mysteriously laid up there, so classified, that whenever we wish to make use of them, we have only to will, and memory pours forth spontaneously the treasures we require, ready for the disposition that we may have intended for them. We may quote another faculty in man's mind, equally demonstrative of a designing, creative God—Imagination. This power not only

bears the proofs of wisdom, but the traces of vast benevolence. Take Scott, Milton, or Shakspeare, (I pass no judgment on their writings or their character, I am speaking of them as poets;) Milton, for instance;—shut him up if you please in a gloomy cell, let the light of heaven cease to reach him—let the countenance of man cease to cheer him—yet that great poet will irradiate his cell with intellectual light—he will people it with ten thousand illustrious characters—he will make in it a spectacle more beauteous than landscapes, and from being a gloomy dungeon it shall appear to his eye “in its fine frenzy rolling” a vast and glorious panorama. What a stupendous power is this, that can give delight to the prisoner in his cell—that can people the gloomiest solitude with the recollections of past and the foreshadows of future years—that can originate dramatic sketches and give birth to poems, as magnificent in conception as they are interesting in perusal. And if we examine minutely all the faculties of man’s mind, we shall not only be struck with the proofs of design in each faculty apart, but with the evidences of benevolent design and wisdom, in the admirable way in which all those faculties are balanced. For

instance ; it is known that the least disarrangement of the faculties of man's mind will produce a degree of mania or of madness ; if imagination be allowed to predominate, it will produce hypochondriasis, and if reason be allowed to predominate, it will produce excessive suspicion, doubt, perplexity, difficulty ; if the exquisite harmony that subsists in the mind of man is interfered with or disturbed, madness in some or other of its most hideous shapes is the natural and necessary result. But so exquisitely balanced are all these powerful faculties, that if treated with ordinary care, they maintain their just proportions, operate in their destined spheres, and give happiness and pleasure to their possessor. And lastly, if we refer to that stupendous power in man's mind—Conscience—we shall see not only a proof of design, but of the existence of a just and holy God. Judas, unable to bear the tortures of conscience, went forth and committed suicide ; and the murderer has often been so harassed by the fears and the spectres which conscience has started into being, that he has been fain to rush forward and proclaim his guilt, and suffer the doom that justice awarded him. What can this be but the echo of the

voice of God? We shall find no land and no race of barbarous and uncivilized men, in which the great landmarks of vice and virtue, of righteousness and wrong doing, are not more or less faintly recognised, felt, and acted on. Conscience, therefore, not only proclaims the existence of a God, but tells us that God is a just and holy God, and that he has appointed in man's bosom, even in the bosom of the guiltiest and the most depraved, a monitor that even in its ruins and its degradation will tell "of righteousness, of temperance, and of judgment to come.

These, then, are some evidences, (and others might be adduced)—or a few specimens, rather, of the mode in which we can demonstrate the existence of a God, even from the open book of the world in which we live. It is therefore with exquisite beauty that one of our own poets declares the plainness and perspicuity with which nature tells us of a God. Milton says—

"These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable; who sitt'st above these heav'ns,
To us invisible or dimly seen
In these Thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power Divine."

And another of our poets has said—

“These, as they change, Almighty Father! these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, Thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense, and every heart is joy.
Then comes Thy glory in the Summer months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun
Shoots full perfection thro’ the swelling year;
And oft Thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks;
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales.
Thy bounty shines in Autumn, unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter, awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o’er tempest roll’d,
Majestic darkness, on the whirlwind’s wing
Riding sublime, Thou bid’st the world adore,
And humblest nature with Thy northern blast.

Mysterious round! What skill, what force Divine
Deep-felt in these appear! A simple train,
Yet so delightful, mix’d with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined,
Shade unperceived so softening into shade,
And all so forming a harmonious whole,
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee; marks not the mighty Hand,
That ever busy wheels the silent spheres,
Works in the secret deep, shoots streaming thence
The fair profusion that o’erspreads the Spring,

Flings from the sun direct the flaming day,
Feeds every creature, hurls the tempest forth,
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song, where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on th' Atlantic isles, 't is nought to me ;
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste, as in the city full ;
And where He vital breathes, there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey ; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing. I cannot go
Where Universal Love smiles not around ;
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns ;
From seeming evil, still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in Light ineffable.
Come then, expressive silence ! muse His praise."

Nature, however, we are constrained to admit, proclaims the existence of a God ; but concerning what that God is to us, Nature is altogether silent. Nature tells us that there is a God, possessed of boundless wisdom and of vast benevolence ; but nature's oracles do not announce that that God will pardon sin. It gives us intimations from our conscience,

that He is just ; it gives us intimations from the mechanism of our frames, that He is infinitely wise ; it whispers to us, from the broad surface of the world we gaze on, that He is a benevolent God ; but conscience, while it tells us that God is holy, tells us too, in the tones of a despair that it cannot dissipate, that man is a fallen, guilty, miserable sinner. I ask philosophy, How shall God be just while he justifies the ungodly ? I ask of physiology, with all its bright and its brilliant announcements, Will God forgive me my sins ? I ask of astronomy, as it discloses world piled on world, if amid the brightness and glory of those stars, if amid the splendour of those ten thousand lamps, it has discovered that there is “a just God, and yet a Saviour.” And all nature is dumb. Astronomy is dumb ; the mechanism of a man’s frame is dumb. Still the great proposition, that must be solved before my dying pillow can be peace, remains unexplicated, unreconciled, unknown. I feel myself a sinner ; my conscience tells me, my memory tells me, my judgment tells me—and you, my brethren, *feel*, each one within himself—“I am a guilty sinner.” I ask, then, how will you bear the blaze of that in-

effable light, in which the angels are stained with folly, and the burning seraphim seem touched with imperfection? I ask, "How shall man be just with God?" No sweet tones can come from the caves of the ocean, from the mines of the earth, from the stars in the firmament, from the discoveries of philosophy, from propositions, from sciences; all there is dumb, hopelessly dumb. Where, then, shall I find it? Go with me, reader, to Him, whose dying cry is still heard, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—and after you have marked the rending rocks, and the mantled sun, and the shrouded stars, and all nature convulsed with horror at the greatness of man's guilt and the stupendousness of God's love, then hear whispered from Him who spake as "never man spake," even from the crucified Nazarene, "Mercy and truth are in me met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Gaze into the face of *nature*, and God is veiled in darkness, in obscurity, in clouds; you cannot fully see Him. Gaze upon the brow of *conscience*, and conscience tells you that God is armed with ten thousand terrors to destroy you. But gaze into the countenance of *Jesus*, and He tells you,

in His own thrilling and merciful tones, that God "is a JUST God and yet a SAVIOUR."

We discover God from nature by a *process of reasoning*, much of which falls dull and blunt upon the ordinary ear; but in the countenance of Jesus we discover God by *testimony*, which is the most impressive and the most certain of all intimations. For one witness to a *fact* is worth ten thousand syllogisms for the independent establishment of that fact. Hence in nature, God even at the best is dimly and imperfectly descried. But in the Gospel, the Lord of glory has come forth from His bosom, the personification of his love, the exemplar of His holiness, the result of His wisdom; and on Calvary, that sacred spot in the centre of God's universe where the epochal hour "It is finished" struck, God can come down to me, and behold in me, sinner as I am, a child, a son—"and if a son, then an heir, an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ"—and there I too can look up to God, and see no longer the angry and offended Judge, but recognize my Father and Christ's Father, my God and Christ's God. When, therefore, we compare the uncertainties, clouds and darkness, that brood upon God as He

is revealed in the book of nature—and when we look at the plainness and the perspicuity, with which GOD A SAVIOUR is seen in the book of revelation—are we not constrained to exclaim in the ecstasy of admiration and of gratitude, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift,” the Lord Jesus Christ?

CHAPTER III.

IS A REVELATION FROM GOD TO MAN PROBABLE
AND NECESSARY?

THOSE who are fully convinced of the great truths of the Gospel—who have felt their sanctifying power upon their hearts and their peace upon their consciences, may say—such discussions are not profitable to us; we want, they say, living nutriment, not disquisitions about the shell that contains it:

These essays are not meant for you, but for others. Yet you may find some interesting fact you have forgotten, or read some illustrative truth that makes brighter, if it does not make surer your faith.

But the “body of Christ” is made up of several members, to each of whom a portion must be given; and readers, like congregations, are composed of several sorts of individuals; and those therefore who are advanced in the Christian life must not grudge if we try to meet those who are not advanced (or probably opposed) on first principles, and

lead them step by step to this most important conclusion—that the Bible has God for its Author, truth without any admixture of error for its matter, and salvation for its end. If I were the means of reclaiming one infidel to the knowledge and enjoyment of the Gospel, or of strengthening the convictions of one wavering mind, it would be worth while to spend and be spent in pursuit of even such a prize. I may not be the means of convincing some of what they are already fully convinced of; but this little work *may* be the means of their being able to meet the sceptic, and of their convincing him that our faith is no unreasonable or improbable or extravagant assumption. We live in times too when such knowledge is absolutely necessary. Assertion, however eloquent or influential the asserter may be, is no longer regarded as evidence—we must be able every one, and they that labour among others specially, to give to him that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them. Now are *you* sure, reader, that you are able to give a reason, that will satisfy, not a Christian, but a sceptic, that your faith has no frail foundation? That writing cannot be utterly destitute of good, which impresses upon our minds sub-

stantial reasons for the faith that is in us, and enables us, when cast unhappily and in the course of this world's business into the fellowship of the unbelieving, to convince them that we have not believed cunningly devised fables.

On the subject, however, of a Divine revelation, our immediate topic, I will proceed, *first*, to show that there is *nothing inconsistent with analogy and our experience in the fact of a revelation*; and *secondly*, that *there was great need for such a revelation*.

It may here, however, be proper to remark that by such revelation we mean pure, undefiled and scriptural religion. Many have seen and rejected grievous corruptions bearing the name of Christianity. They have seen Christianity, not in its pure and unadulterated glories, but in some form in which man has shaped it, or fresh from some of the moulds in which superstition has cast it. To reject Christianity in one of these, the form of Roman Catholicism for instance, indicates to my mind a greater degree of attachment to truth and a nobler intellect, than to embrace it. In that system, inquisitions stained with blood, liberty perishing in prison cells, literature pining away in

cloisters, and female chastity and loveliness injured and destroyed in the abominable nurseries of convents and of nunneries, are proofs of the absence not of the presence of Christianity. These are not the fruits, and this system is not the product of the Gospel of Jesus. For the infidel to say, "I reject such a system," is really to show that the fall has left within him remnants of moral sentiment not utterly extinguished, or obliterated. I was once told, by a French Pastor, that he himself had witnessed a statue of our Lord in France decked out in the robes of a Jesuit; on seeing which a Protestant minister most appropriately wrote below on the pedestal—"Thus have they clothed Thee, my Saviour, lest any one should love Thee." This is just the type of Christianity in the form of Popery. Thus have priests and popes contaminated and dismantled thee, O blessed Gospel, lest any one should believe and love and cherish thee.

Christianity is not a Church, a sect, or a shibboleth. It is the truth fresh from the fountain of truth—the word of God sounding forth from His own eternal oracles. Churches, like earthen vessels, are frail and liable to decay. Christianity, the revelation

of Jesus Christ, endures for ever; forms are mutable as the clouds; great truths are eternal as the stars. The religion I attempt to prove to be from God is the religion of the New Testament, and that alone—not carved into creeds, but pure and perfect as God has created it. This alone is Christianity.

But I must here observe, that the infidel meets us with a preliminary objection. A revelation from God, he alleges, is contrary to all experience and analogies. This is his first objection; and some will not listen to any other argument, until we convince them that a revelation from God to man is not contrary to experience and analogy.

A revelation is not contrary to experience. For how was the first man instructed? He must have come forth from the hands of his Maker, perfectly able to discourse of flowers and fruits and minerals and stars. Where got he language? Where got he names for the animal creation? Where got he instruction and experience? God taught him. If he had not been taught, the first evening that the sun set he would have believed that the whole world was come to an end. He would, otherwise, have perished from inexperience. It is a plain matter of fact—that God did at

first teach man, and thus gave a revelation to man. Whether it be admitted or decided that the Mosaic record is true, there must have been a commencement to the successive links of humanity. The first man must have been taught, and if the Mosaic record be, as we believe, a true history, Adam was instructed of God and created perfect in knowledge, as well as perfect in all his powers.

But apart from the Mosaic record, must we not be satisfied that there are in man's mind and knowledge elements which must have been instilled at the first? Who communicated them? Who gave man his first lesson? Must not language have been taught to man from heaven? It was alleged by some sceptics, that if you placed man in a savage wilderness he would instinctively know how to express himself in words; but the experiment was once made, and it was found that he grew up dumb. An enthusiast, who went as far in the opposite direction, expressed his belief that if you were to isolate a man in a wilderness, he would be found to express himself in Hebrew. The experiment was made and he grew up dumb. Who taught man then?

Perhaps you will say his fathers, and they were taught by their forefathers. But who taught *them*? There must have been a time when *the first* man was taught. Surely God must have taught *him*.

There is then, we allege, every *probability* that God has given or will give a revelation of His will. Can we believe that the God of nature is good, benevolent, and merciful, and yet that He will leave millions and millions more of the family He fashioned to grope in "darkness that may be felt?" Is it at all probable, that God would continue to leave His dependent progeny to grope in thick darkness, without sending one solitary ray from the inaccessible light in which He lives, to lead the ignorant to the knowledge of their duty, their destiny, and their God? I say, the surprise should *not* be that God *has given* a revelation; the matter of surprise would be, if He *had not*. And therefore instead of it being improbable that He should give a revelation, we ought to hold it to be extremely improbable that He should have left mankind without one particle of light direct as to their future destiny, hopes, and inheritance.

All presumptions are in favour of the exist-

ence of a communication from God. Shall the earthly father rarely fail to communicate with his offspring, and will our Heavenly Father leave His without a dim light and audible voice—a sufficient directory amid the darkness of sin—the din of conflict—and the perplexities of the world?

But such a revelation of God's will is not contrary but according to our experience of nature.

The child is taught by its father; the scholar is taught by his tutor; and the *inexperienced* is taught by the experienced. Now what is a revelation but just the extension of this plan, just the addition of another link? If the young be taught by the aged, the stripling by the patriarch, the inexperienced by the experienced, we have only to add another link to the chain, and we come to the natural presumption that the world may be or has been taught by its Creator, the human family by its Almighty Father. A revelation, therefore, so far from being contrary to our experience or to the analogy of nature, is positively in full and perfect accordance with all that we see and find in the world around us. It is, in other words, but the addition of another link to what we

see to be the evident chain, along and through which knowledge travels. What is the nineteenth century, but the product of the eighteenth? and what was the eighteenth, but the product of the seventeenth? and what is all history, but the grey-haired fathers of the past teaching the children of the present? and what is that present, but the inexperienced of to-day learning from their predecessors the experience of yesterday? And what finally is revelation, but the great and good Father bending the heavens and coming down and teaching His large family what He is and what they are? And if we wish to behold revelation personified in its most lovely form, we shall see it presented upon that occasion when Jesus knelt upon a hill-side in the midst of Palestine, with the twelve disciples kneeling around Him, and as their spokesman and their leader, said, "Our Father, which art in heaven." It was the loveliest picture that ever was presented; a Raphael and a Poussin would fail to convey by their expressive pencils the loveliness of that picture—the great God of heaven and of earth kneeling on the side of the bleak mountain He had made, and teaching His

apostles gathered around Him, to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven?"

In the next place, what is the *nature* of the instruction that we derive, one from another? Is it not of an experimental and a moral kind? In other words, when we see the patriarch or the aged individual teaching the group that is around him, what is the nature of his teaching? He is teaching them all the dangers and the difficulties through which he has come; he is telling them how to withstand this peril, how to overcome that trial, how to meet this emergency, how to unravel that perplexity. In other words, his instruction is moral and directive; he teaches from the past how they are to comport themselves throughout the future. Is it not kindred lessons when God teaches in revelation how we are to meet the difficulties, to overcome the trials, to vanquish the foes, and to inherit the glory and the happiness which lie before us?

Revelation, then, instead of being contrary to analogy and experience, is in full harmony with all experience and analogy.

But a revelation was not only probable, but it was absolutely demanded by the state of the world previous to the advent of Christ.

I might show that there are wants in man's heart, which all the philosophy of a Plato cannot satisfy; and feelings and perplexities in man's moral constitution, which the prescriptions of moralists cannot meet. I might show, that there is a consciousness of sin, and a dread of punishment arising from it, which cannot be stilled unless by what is intimated in the oracles of God. But I forbear; I will quote only facts. I will show, *first*, from a view of the state of the ancient heathen, *secondly*, of the modern heathen, and *lastly*, of infidels themselves, that a revelation from God was absolutely necessary to save the earth from utter corruption. Left to itself, the population of the globe would have perished from its face, some by the hands of their enemies, others by their own. Creation sent up its deepest groans after its Creator. The human family unconsciously cried aloud for a word of truth and peace from Him that made them. Deplorable indeed were the views entertained of the character of God in ancient heathen times. By one party of heathen philosophers, God was regarded merely as a great first Cause; in other words, as the first wheel in a series of wheels, and not different from the rest of

the links that succeeded Him. Others of the heathen held that there was no God, but a kind of fatalism pervading heaven and earth, which necessitated fixed results, but that there was no superintending intelligent power. Another portion, the Epicureans, held that God was a Being wrapt in selfishness and self-complacency, and perfectly regardless of all that was doing in the world or transpiring amongst mankind. Another portion held that there was a multiplicity of gods—thousands, and thousands more, superintending the world; and in Athens, such was the rage for gods, that the remark was made, that it was “more easy to find a god than a man;” and such was their rage for idol gods, that at last, when that most expressive language was exhausted and they could find no more names for invented deities, they raised an altar τῷ ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ, “to the unknown God,” the undescribed god. Some of the gods which the heathen worshipped were among the greatest monsters that ever walked the earth. Mercury was a thief; and because he was an expert thief, he was enrolled among the gods. Bacchus was a mere sensualist and drunkard; and therefore he was enrolled among the gods. Venus

was a dissipated and abandoned courtesan; and therefore she was enrolled among the goddesses. Mars was a savage, that gloried in battle and in blood; and therefore he was deified and enrolled among the gods. In short, there is not one lust that nestles in the human heart, nor one vice that deforms and depraves human conduct, which was not positively deified, and which did not more or less characterize one of the gods in the Pantheon of antiquity.

Now if it be said, "Ah! but that was in an age not enlightened as the nineteenth century is"—I answer, Are you aware that the very country in which there were such gods is the country in which, and in those very days, were such men as a Homer, a Sophocles, a Hesiod, a Euripides, a Plato, a Socrates, a Theocritus—the most distinguished philosophers and poets who ever adorned the history of mankind? Are you aware, that the gods I have here described were worshipped in the very country where Homer lived and Plato taught—in the very land too, where the harp of Virgil resounded its Mæonian strains, and Cicero pleaded for the liberties and the rights of mankind—in the very country that gave birth to paintings

which modern art cannot approach, and that produced statues which are still the master-pieces of the world?

But if we refer to modern heathens, we find the very same, if not a worse theology. If we turn to the Hindoos, we find they have not less than three hundred and thirty millions of gods; if to the Chinese, they have gods in every house and in every grove; and the missionary traveller Gutzlaff states, that he saw upon sign-boards in China,—“Gods made and repaired in this house,”—than which surely there cannot be a more degrading and horrible evidence of the fearful idolatry and the wretched theology of that empire. In some parts of those eastern countries, they worship snakes and serpents and lizards and crocodiles, and even productions of the vegetable kingdom; and such is their superstition, that they pray by wind-mills, and suppose that if the prayer is placed in the sail of the mill, and turned round by the wind, that prayer rises with singular acceptance to God. But if again you say—“This must be among a barbarous race”—I answer, Not at all. The Hindoos are, in mathematical science, among the most accomplished people in the world. They are

supposed to be the first inventors of the highest branch of it—the differential calculus. The discovery of the mariner's compass and of gunpowder are clearly and plainly attributable to the Chinese. Moreover the Hindoos have all the English literature; they have our Shakspeare, and our Milton, and our Addison, and our Johnson, all translated into Hindostanee—and even Hume's Infidel Essays; all of which they read with great interest, and even with great admiration. They are not like the people of Tahiti or the South Sea Islands—a barbarous and uncivilized race; but a scientific and enlightened people. And yet such is the theology that flourishes under the wing of high intellectual knowledge!

What now are the views of God entertained by modern infidels? And let me preface my remarks here, by stating that whatever clear notions they have of God, they have stolen from the Bible, labelling their plagiarisms with the light of nature, whilst in their wickedness they deny the source from which they took them. But we will take their own definitions. Lord Bolingbroke says that power and wisdom are the only attributes of God, and that a

superintending providence is an absurdity too great to be imagined. David Hume declares that it is unreasonable to believe in a wise and a good God, and that the notion of future rewards and punishments is a mere piece of priestcraft. Hobbes said that vice and virtue, Creator and creature, were all terms invented by man, but not founded in reality. If we pass from our own countrymen to French infidels, Voltaire, D'Alembert, Mirabeau, and Diderot—they all declare that there is no God, that there is no responsibility, that there are no rewards and no punishments in the world to come.

Such are the views entertained respecting God, by the most enlightened and advanced nations of antiquity—such the views of the most intelligent among modern heathen nations—and such the notions of three or four of the leading infidels and sceptics of recent times. They are all equally wretched beyond utterance. Take them all, and place them, the best of them, beside the “I AM THAT I AM” of the illiterate Jews. Listen, after any or all of them, to the words, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving

iniquity and transgression and sin ;” and say which is from above.

Having thus looked at the notions entertained of God, we would next briefly review the notions of morality entertained among the three classes referred to ; first the views of ancient heathens, next of modern heathens, and lastly of infidels.

One proof of the wretched views entertained of morality among the ancient heathen, is the notions they had of the nature of the gods. I have stated that Mercury was a thief, Bacchus a drunkard, and Jupiter a licentious and blood-thirsty sensualist. These gods were all the creations of the people, and the exponents of their highest belief. Now if the heathen made gods of such characters, this alone will show that their morality must have been of a correspondingly wretched nature. Again ; cruelty was practised among the ancients to an extent of which we have no modern instances. The ancient Carthaginians were in the habit of sacrificing children to their gods. The ancient Germans and Britons sacrificed human beings. The ancient Egyptians offered up yearly so many boys and girls to the Nile. The rites of Moloch were sanguinary beyond expression.

Achilles, as related in Homer, immolated twelve Trojans. Sons and daughters were offered in sacrifice in the public markets, and their parents accustomed to preside, and the wretched Helots were occasionally destroyed by thousands, in order to arrest the increase of the slave population. A creditor, in ancient times, could seize a debtor after so many days and sell him as a slave, or cut his body in pieces and send it to his wife and children. A father had the power of life and death over his children. Need I refer to the gladiatorial games, in which man fought with man, or men with wild beasts, while the ladies of the empire, the female aristocracy, gazed upon man plunging the sword in the breast of man, and then celebrated a feast in honour of the conqueror on the field whereon systematized murder had been committed? Who is ignorant also of the fact that deformed children were legally destroyed? If we look to the nature of their worship of the ancient gods, we find that murder and homicide were rites of peculiar propitiatory value and of frequent practice. Cruelty was canonized. Lust was holy. In the temple of Venus a thousand prostitutes were the priestesses, and the accepted wor-

ship accordingly; in the temple of Bacchus, sensualists and drunkards were believed to be peculiarly welcome to that god. Need I quote as proofs of the debasing immorality of ancient heathenism, the Aphrodisia, the Ludi Floriales, and the Lupercalia? Crimes not fit to be mentioned were common. These were the scenes of profligacy and sensuality, and they disappeared or ceased to be celebrated in open day only before the light of Christianity. If we examine any or all of their religious rites and practices, we shall find that a foul and degrading immorality was their universal characteristic, with scarcely one ray of light or purity to alleviate the gloom. I might also mention the treatment of the female character in ancient nations. Woman at the best was but a slave in ancient Greece; she was no more than a slave in imperial Rome. The laws of divorce were such as would have gratified the most devoted follower of Owen, or Socialist of the present day. If a husband through passion or caprice chose to divorce his wife, it could be instantly done. She was regarded, not as his companion and his equal, but his slave. What is it, then, that has raised woman to that just and lofty position, which

she now occupies in Christian lands? It is the Gospel. And nothing has so much surprised and startled me, as to hear of *females* listening to the miserable sophistry of the lectures of the Socialist and Owenite schools. They little know the debt of gratitude they owe to the Gospel: they little know that it is Christianity that has asserted for them the right of being the equals and companions of the rougher and the ruder sex. But in ancient times there was no such equality. It is also known, such was the state of female education, that a learned lady was synonymous with a dissipated woman; a Corinthian, a female inhabitant of Corinth, was a name that corresponded with courtesan. Aspasia, the admired and caressed of philosophers, would not now be admitted into decent society. The great philosophers of Greece, even those who rose highest in searching after the knowledge of God, were most of them gross sensualists. Such it is known was Socrates, and such was Plato; even those who taught a proud and vaunting philosophy on the banks of the Ilyssus and amid the groves of Academus, were in their private conduct licentious debauchees.

Let us look next at modern heathens, and

we shall find proofs of the prevalence of a yet more miserable morality. Belzoni states that the modern inhabitants of Gournoo live in the tombs, the Tibboos live in caves, and the Bornoos have no proper names. The Caraibs are still cannibals. These enjoy the light of nature. What has made us to differ? Can there be any doubt? In China woman is a most degraded and miserable being. Female infants are repeatedly destroyed. Gutzlaff states in his journal, that in walking the streets of Pekin he saw an infant cast into a stream and just on the verge of being drowned; as there were five or six individuals standing by, he asked them why they suffered it to perish. "It is only a female," was their answer. From a calculation I have seen, I find that in Pekin alone there are twenty-four female suicides every day. The female character sickens at its oppression: "the iron has entered their souls," and taught them that life is but one scene of torture and of shame, and anxious to escape it, they are notorious for suicide. It is well known, that among the Hindoos, up to a very recent period (and the practice is only now put a stop to in a measure by the energetic efforts of the British Government) the

moment the husband dies, the widow must lie down upon the funeral pyre, and be consumed to ashes with the dead body of her husband. In Bengal alone fifteen thousand widows were computed to have been burnt every year, because their husbands had died. This then, is the respect in which the female sex is held in those countries where Christianity is unknown. Infanticide, especially female infanticide, is so notorious in Hindostan, as to be subject of remark in almost every book that treats of the Hindoo character. Mothers seem even in this to indicate the unextinguished nobleness of their nature, which a wretched superstition would try to crush; rather than see their daughters treated in the way in which they will be in after life, they are glad to throw them into the nearest river to put an end to their wretched existence. This is heathenism; this is science-cultivating heathenism. Among the modern Hindoos, lying, as testified by Sir John Shore, Governor-general of Bengal, and by many others, is almost reckoned a virtue; a lie, which a Christian Sunday scholar repudiates as a disgrace and a shame, is there almost a virtue and an excellency: and, though denied by some, it is too clearly

proved to admit of dispute. In India there is a class called Thugs, who fancy they shall get an addition to their happiness hereafter for every human being they murder ; so that murder is not only their trade, but is actually part and parcel of their daily worship.

And now what is the character of modern infidel morality ? Ancient and modern heathen ethics are alike ; let us see what is the morality of those men, who treat with such supercilious contempt the system of the Gospel, and profess to be in possession of a purer and higher faith.

Let us take, for instance, infidelity upon a large scale ; let us go back to the year 1793. In France at that day, Christianity was dethroned ; the light of the Gospel, as far as the outward exhibition and acknowledgment of it were concerned, was almost quenched. The followers of infidelity had complete ascendancy. The National Convention declared that the creed of France was—" No God ;" and they stood upon the graves of holy martyrs, and wrote " Death an eternal sleep ;" but with the marvellous inconsistency of poor miserable man, as if they felt they could not do without a God, they placed a harlot upon the chief altar of France and worshipped her

as "The goddess of reason;" and yet these, the harlot-worshippers, are the men, that despise the attributes of God as revealed in the Gospel of his Son. Robespierre, overwhelmed by the growing disorganization, at length admitted that it was impossible society could hold together without a God, and that it would be necessary to invent one. Lord Herbert declares, that lust and passion are no more blameworthy than thirst or hunger. Hobbes, the celebrated infidel, maintained that right and wrong are mere quibbles of man's imagination, and that there is no real distinction between them. Lord Bolingbroke asserted, that the chief end of man was to gratify his lusts and passions, that he was so made, and when he gratified these he got his greatest happiness. Hume declared that self-denial and humility were positive vices, and that adultery rather elevated than degraded the human character. Rousseau taught, that whatever man feels, is right. Paine, the gross blasphemer, died in drunkenness. Voltaire advocated the very depths of the lowest possible sensuality. The morals of Blount were execrable. Yet these are paragons of sceptical excellence. These are the examples, that are to be substituted ("wonder, O

heavens ! and be astonished, O earth !") for the example of the meek and lowly Jesus. These are the patterns we are to follow, for which we are to part with Christianity : these are the principles we are to imbibe at the risk of being branded as bigots if we reject them. What a contrast are they to those glorious principles revealed in the sacred page ; that ennoble whilst they save and cheer, whilst they sanctify the souls of the sons of men.

I have thus touched upon the subject in two points of view. I need not state, that almost all these sceptics were men of gross and licentious lives. The only exception (if it be one, but it has been disputed, and disputed with great probability)—the only exception is *perhaps* David Hume ; the bulk of them were men of immoral and licentious lives.

We have one striking exhibition of an infidel's brightest thoughts, in some lines written in his dying moments by a man, gifted with great genius, capable of prodigious intellectual prowess, but of worthless principle, and yet more worthless practice—I mean the celebrated Lord Byron. He says—

"Though gay companions o'er the bowl
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill,
 Though pleasure fills the maddening soul,
 The heart—the heart is lonely still.

"Aye, but to die, and go, alas !
 Where all have gone, and all must go ;
 To be the *Nothing* that I was,
 Ere born to life and living woe !

"Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
 Count o'er thy days from anguish free ;
 And know, whatever thou hast been,
 'Tis *something better* not to be,

"Nay, for myself, so dark my fate
 Through every turn of life hath been,
Man and the *world* so much *I hate*,
 I care not when I quit the scene."

Is this the fruit of infidelity ? Is this all a dying infidel's rest and hope ? Contrast it with the language of St. Paul—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." How great the contrast. This last is worthy of man ; this requiem ennobles even dying man ; this looks like the creed of veracity, of virtue, and of God.

How did most of all these sceptics die ?

The facts are on record. Who has not read the account of the death of Voltaire, who admitted the excellence of the religion he ridiculed, than which nothing can be more painful, and yet nothing else could be expected from the creed in which he was educated. It is said—"During a long life he was continually insulting the Scriptures and disseminating moral poison. In his last illness he sent for Dr. Tronchin, who, when he came, found him in the greatest agonies, exclaiming with the utmost horror, 'I am abandoned by God and man.' " This is the man who applied the epithet, "The wretch," to our blessed Lord, and the motto appended to all his writings was "Crush the wretch." We now hear what that man's death-bed was. "He then said, 'Oh! doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life.' The doctor answered, 'Sir, you cannot live six weeks.' Voltaire replied, 'Then I shall go to hell.' " Now I will read you also the account of his death-bed given by Abbé Baruel. "In his last illness he sent for Diderot, D'Alembert, and others of his infidel companions, but they witnessed only their own shame. Often he would curse these men, and say—"Retire; it is you that

have brought me to my present state. I could have done without you all, but you could not exist without me.' They could hear him, the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating and blaspheming God; and in plaintive tones he would cry out, 'O Jesus Christ!'—and complain that 'he was abandoned by God and man.'” And to crown all, this hoary infidel, this boaster against man and blasphemer of God, sent for a Roman Catholic priest, the Abbé Gualtier, to give him the sacrament!! Dr. Tronchin said, that the furies of Orestes could give but a faint idea of the state and conscience of Voltaire.

Mirabeau died calling out, “Give me more laudanum, that I may not think of eternity and of what is to come.” Paine, the vulgar infidel, died drunk and swearing. The atheist Hobbes said in his last hours, “I am now about to take a leap in the dark.” The philosophic David Hume, who had the utmost moral fortitude, and the most of intellect and the least of feeling, died jesting about the boat of Charon, the fabled ferryman, and passing the river Styx. It is matter of record, that Rousseau, a notorious debauchee, died saying, “O God, I give Thee my soul pure

and untainted as it came from Thy hands.” Rousseau was Protestant, Papist, Jansenist, by turns. He lived in concubinage and adultery by turns, and consigned his illegitimate children to the Foundling Hospital.

Behold, then, upon the one hand, the life and the death of the most noted infidels of modern times; and behold, upon the other hand, to take another Scripture example, the death of the martyr Stephen. Behold the dying sceptic asking for opium to extinguish sense and feeling and judgment—hear the blaspheming and the cursing of one, the despair and cries for a few more minutes of existence that start from the lips of another; and then listen to the dying accents of the Christian martyr, while heaven burst upon his vision, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” I ask, Which is the death of the righteous? which creed has power? which seems more worthy of God?—and I feel each that reads will say, “Let me die the death of the Christian, and let my last end be like his.”

I ask now, after reading these facts, if there is not now made out a necessity for God somehow and somewhere to interpose and speak, in order that men may hear. The state of ancient heathen theology shows there was a

strong necessity for a revelation ; the state of modern heathen theology shows it ; the best views of infidels show it ; the morality of all of them, their life and their death, prove man's deep necessity of a revelation, to teach him to live holy and to die happy. We maintain that such a revelation has been given, and is contained in this sacred volume. To see what sin has made man, and where nature helplessly leaves him, read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. To see what the Gospel makes man, to what pitch of glory and excellence it exalts him, read the eighth chapter of that same epistle.

Let me urge one point in conclusion—the comparative condition of the *Jews* and the *Greeks*. Here are the Jews, who never produced a Homer in poetry, nor a Praxiteles in statuary, nor an Apelles in painting ; neither painter, nor poet, nor philosopher, worthy to live through future ages ; an illiterate and unscientific nation. Here, on the other hand, are the Greeks—the most enlightened, the most cultivated, the most learned of nations. Among the illiterate Jews we find so sublime a view and knowledge of God, that all man's efforts cannot add to it ; but among the Greeks we find such wretched notions of God, that lan-

guage cannot depict the degradation of them. Now I ask, how happens it that in the nation most distinguished for science there was the most low and degrading theology, and in the nation signalized by a total want of literature, there was a simple, and sublime, and elevating theology? The answer is obvious. In Greece, you have the result of man's groping after God, man's unaided discoveries concerning God; in Judea, you have God's teaching and revelation of Himself—a proof so plain that “he who runs may read.”

The Bible alone has reclaimed the human mind from darkness, and the human heart from despair. Its truths are the strong pillars on which the whole fabric of our personal and social prosperity reposes; it has terminated the direst woes, kindled the splendours of heaven in the deepest darkness, and made the wide wastes of moral desolation blossom as the rose.

CHAPTER IV.

IS THE BIBLE GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC?

IT is a matter of fact, that Christianity has come into the world some time, and some where, and some how. Its influence, its plastic power, are seen, heard, and felt. Evidences of this crowd around us. The past naturally gives its tone to the present, and the present is more or less the offspring of the past. The fall of Constantinople is at this moment evident, for it exerted an influence on the literature of Europe, that is felt at this day: the crusades, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, materially affected the political condition of Europe; and by their surviving traces, the existence of both is proved. Christianity is no less demonstrably a fact. It has left its tone also upon kings, statutes, imperial rescripts, the literature, the poetry, and the science of the world, as is obvious to every reader or observer at this hour. There is no dispute about the fact of its existence. Its effects are visible; the

trophies of its victories, the footprints of its progress, are on the sands of time. No past occurrence has left so powerful a posthumous influence. The ceaseless waves of time have swept away the traces of Alexander's battles, and Napoleon's victories. They have only cleared off the weeds that dimmed the imperishable marks of Christianity. The only question is—When was Christianity introduced? who are its authors? what are its claims to our belief as a system of revelation from God?

The first branch of the argument I shall unfold, will be an effort to show, that the Bible (or the book that contains Christianity) is, *genuine*, and next, that it is *authentic**—that is, the production of the writers whose names it bears, and that it has come down to

* Genuine means that a book is the production of the writer whose name it bears.

There is a thousand times more evidence that the Gospel of John was written by him, than there is that the *Anabasis* was written by Xenophon, or the *Ars Poetica* by Horace. The Jews hated the Christians; and if the Christians had forged a book in after years, and ascribed it to a writer long since dead, the Jews would have exposed the forgery.

Authentic means relating matters of fact as they occurred, and entitled therefore to full credit.

us in its genuine and unadulterated form. This will be our first (and a most important) demonstration—that Christianity, as it is contained in the Bible, and as we have it printed before us, is precisely now as it was at first revealed. It may, in fact, be very easily shown that it is utterly impossible that the Bible can be the forgery of a period subsequent to the days in which it claims to have been written.

Now, in the first place, the Jews were not only opposed to the truths contained in the New Testament, and to the whole of Christianity as a system, but wherever they were able they imprisoned its apostolic preachers, as they had put its great Founder to an ignominious death. If, therefore, at a period long subsequent to the death of Christ, a number of men had appeared in the world, drawn up a book which they designated by the name of Holy Scripture, and recorded these things which appear in it as facts when they were only the fancies of their own imagination, surely *the Jews* would have instantly reclaimed that no such events transpired, that no such person as Jesus Christ appeared in their capital, and that *their* crucifixion of him, and their alleged evil treat-

ment of his apostles were mere fictions. But we read of no such objection recorded or attempted. We find on all sides a concurrent consent, among friends and foes, that the Bible was composed by the persons whose names it bears, under the circumstances and in the age wherein it professes to have come forth, and that its facts (whatever its doctrines be) are true.

In the next place, I have in my possession a considerable portion, if not the whole of the writings of three of those who are called the five apostolic fathers—that is, men who either talked with the apostles, or were personally acquainted with them, or lived contemporaneously with them. The five were Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. The first and third are of little value; the last is supposed to be addressed in the book of Revelation as the minister or “angel” of the church in Smyrna. Now, in the writings of these fathers, from the year 100 to the year 160, we shall find passages extracted from the writings of Paul, from the writings of John and Peter, from the Gospels of Matthew, of Mark, of Luke, and of John; and these extracts have sometimes the names of the apostles by whom

they were written attached to them, and have also appended the declaration of these apostolic writers, that the Scriptures thus quoted were the inspiration of the Almighty. This is most important testimony. In these most early writers, with every opportunity of conversing with the apostles, of proving their statements and weighing their arguments, we find whole passages of Sacred Writ verbatim as we read them in the word of God—extracted, quoted, approved, and acknowledged as the inspiration of God, and just as now printed in the Epistles and Gospels of Paul, John, Mark, and so on. And not only this; but we find in the post-apostolic fathers, as they are called, namely, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and the two Gregories, Augustine and Jerome, from the year 160 to between 500 and 600, frequent and large quotations from different parts of the Bible, as books bearing the names of the writers which we now find attached to them in our Bible; and also stating that those writings were the inspiration of God, composed under his guidance, by the writers whose names they bear. And what proves the purity of our Bible, there is no real difference between the passages quoted

from it in these writings of the first five centuries, and those which we find in volumes of sermons accurately extracted in the nineteenth century and in the authorized version. During these five centuries, then—during the earliest five centuries of the Christian Church—we have writers quoting from the writings contained in the Bible at great length, passages the same as we read them, ascribing those writings to the authors whose names are now attached to them, and proclaiming it as a matter of universal admission among Christians that they were the inspiration of God.

This, however, will not perhaps satisfy the sceptic. We therefore add that the earliest rejecters of Christianity never disputed, that the Gospels according to Matthew, Luke, and John, and the Epistles, were actually written by the persons whose names they bear, and at their professed date. For instance; the subtle infidel Porphyry, who was born in the year 233, and Julian the Apostate,* who lived in the

* Some of the most noted were, the Emperor Julian, commonly called the Apostate, Celsus, Porphyry, Cerinthus, Marcian.

year 331, and Celsus, earlier than either, men of acute minds, and who laboured night and day to overturn the claims of the Bible, both admitted that it was written by the persons whose names are attached to it, and quote long passages from the Bible as unquestioned portions of its contents, and as written by the men named as its writers. Thus these men, who hated the Gospel, and were anxious to overturn it, yet retain in their writings portions of that Gospel, just as we now find them in the Bible, and never think of disputing their genuineness; demonstrating thereby that the Bible is unmutilated, and that we have it now as it was in the first five centuries of the Christian era.*

The next fact that I would adduce is, that translations were made at a very early era of almost the whole of Sacred Writ. For instance; the Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible made at least three centuries before the birth of Christ, and remains a proof that the Hebrew Bible as we now have it, is substantially the same that was used among the Jews three centuries before

* Chrysostom employs this reasoning in his Sixth Homily, on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, vol. x. p. 47.

the birth of Christ. That the Jews preserved the Scriptures unmutilated is obvious from this fact alone, that our Lord never charged them with corrupting, though often with neglecting, the sacred text. He said they had "made void the word of God by their traditions;" yet never once did our Lord charge them with mutilating or corrupting the sacred volume. Nay, so scrupulously particular were the Jews in preserving it, that they have counted the number of words, syllables, letters, and paragraphs, in every book, and recorded also the middle word, the middle chapter or paragraph, and how many periods or sentences are contained in each book. This was done long before the Christian era; it arose no doubt from superstitious feelings, but still it has been overruled to demonstrate the great veneration which the Jews always cherished towards the Scriptures, and the sacred watchfulness with which they maintained the text of them inviolate. There are extant nearly 1,200 manuscripts of the Old Testament, all agreeing each substantially with the other. The festivals, too, observed by the Jews in the days of our Lord, and observed to this day by their descendants, can, as matters of fact,

be traced up to their recorded institution, and are thus voices descending from Horeb and Sinai, and the Red Sea, attesting the truth and reality of the Mosaic records. Hesiod's Theogony is a dim reflection of Genesis. The golden age of the poets is the tradition of the history of Eden. The division of time into weeks among all nations refers to the account of creation. In reference to the New Testament, I may observe, there was a translation of it in the second century into the Syriac tongue, in the third century into the Latin tongue, and in subsequent centuries into a variety of tongues, till ultimately it was translated into almost every language under heaven. Now, if there had been any departure in subsequent ages from the sacred text, as it was inspired by the Spirit of God, and originally recorded by the apostles, then, by referring to the Syriac translation made in the second, or the Latin in the third century, we could discover the variance and expose the corruption. But if we take the sacred text as we now receive it, and compare it with that and the other early translations, we find that there is no contrariety, but on the contrary the most complete demonstration of

the unmutilated character of the word of God as we now possess it.

It is here proper to state, that certain false and forged documents were brought forward in the third and fourth centuries, and were quoted by certain parties as the inspired word of God. Infidels too have said—The four Gospels are but a selection from a number of Gospels, and it was merely a conclave of bishops or a camarilla of priests that determined by a majority that the four Gospels you place in the Bible were alone inspired, and that the others were forgeries. Now, when a document claims to be written in a certain age and by a certain individual, if it be a forged document, we shall generally find in it *internal disproofs* so decided that you can very easily reject it. This applies to all the pseudo-Gospels which were concocted by heretics, and which were brought forward as written by the apostles. They were found to contain allusions and references to facts, customs, usages, and names, which did not exist till the *fourth* century of the Christian era. If those documents had been written by the apostles, how could they speak about things as matters of present occurrence, which did not occur till four or

five centuries after they were dead? To furnish a specimen of the mode of detecting such forgeries, I will refer to certain ancient liturgies, which the Roman Catholics allege were drawn up by some of the apostles. In the course of controversy with a talented Roman Catholic on a late occasion, these liturgies were put forward as the inspiration of God; and one of them, in particular, was said to be drawn up by the apostle James. Now to show how satisfactorily we prove it to be a forgery, I will appeal to the account given of this liturgy by Dupin, the celebrated, and I may add, impartial Roman Catholic historian. He says—"There remains only the liturgy attributed to St. James, which divers learned men have taken much pains to vindicate, but to no purpose; for although it is more ancient than those we have already examined, yet we ought not to say that St. James was the author thereof, or that it was composed in his time." Now hear his reasons; he examines the document, and ascertains its internal, its post-apostolical character, by evidence. "1: The Virgin Mary is called in this liturgy 'the mother of God,' and the Son and the Holy Ghost are said to be 'consubstantial with the

Father;' terms altogether unknown in St. James's time," and not known in the Christian Church till the third century. "2: We find there the Trisagion and the Doxology (that is to say, the *Sanctus* and *Gloria Patri*), which were not generally recited in the Church until the *fifth* century. 3: There are collects for those shut up in monasteries; can any man say there were monasteries in the time of James? 4: There is mention made of 'confessors;' a term that was not inserted in the Divine offices till a long time after James, according to the confession of Bellarmine. 5: In this liturgy there is mention made of churches, incense, altars;" things, again, which did not exist till the third century. "6: We find many citations from the Epistles of St. Paul, the greater part of which were written after St. James's death. Neither ought we to object, with the cardinals Bona and Bellarmine, that these things were afterwards inserted; because it is not probable they should be added in so many places; besides, the connexion and ceremonies of the whole liturgy do not agree with the time of the apostle." In this document then we find so marked references to events subsequent to the death of James,

that no man can come to the conclusion that it was written by that apostle. This is more or less the case with every forged document, and is true of all the pseudo-gospels; and if the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament had been composed in the third or fourth century, we should have found allusions to then existing customs or events, a peculiar phraseology, all belonging, not to the apostolic age, but to the age in which the documents were forged, and these, as in all similar instances, would have been so abundant that acute and ingenious men would long ere now have demonstrated the fraud. This is a specimen of the process that may be applied. The Epistles and the Gospels of the New Testament will bear, as they have already borne, the most sifting inquiry, the most penetrating inspection, and like gold tried in the furnace they will come out purer, and radiant with a greater glory than when they entered it. It may be useful to give a modern illustration also of this. The Wesleyan Methodists, not very long ago commemorated the centenary of Methodism. Suppose that on this occasion a book was produced, declared to have been published years ago, and to be the composition of John

Wesley, and suppose there is found in it a reference to the Roman Catholic Relief Bill of 1829, another to the Reform Bill of 1832, another to the equestrian statue just erected to the illustrious Duke of Wellington; would it not be objected, ‘Here are references to events that occurred near a hundred years after the death of John Wesley, and these references evidently prove that the document cannot have been composed by him. It is the forgery of one who seeks to palm it on the world as the production of that celebrated man.’ So is it with the Bible. If one could detect in it any reference to events long subsequent as having then transpired, we should have an internal proof of falsehood. But the fact is, it carries upon its brow the impressive demonstration of its parentage—the signature of God—the proof that it was composed by Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul, and Peter, whose names are appended to their respective books in the Bible.

The multiplicity of manuscripts is another evidence, which proves that the sacred Book has been handed down to us pure and undulterated. There is at this moment existing the *Codex Bezae*, or the Cambridge Manu-

script, as it is called, which one distinguished editor, Dr. Kipling, almost proves to have been written in the second century ; but the most learned of modern analysts of the claims of that manuscript admit that it was written in the fourth or fifth century. We have another composed in the fifth century ; and hundreds of manuscripts written in the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. These manuscripts were transcribed by monks and other individuals in their retirement ; and if any subsequent mutilation had been introduced into the sacred volume, these manuscripts drawn out by different individuals and in different ages would make apparent the corruptions that had crept in. But the truth is, we find that the hundred and fifty thousand different readings which Mills and Griesbach and others have collected, are most of them connected with letters, with accents, with commas and stops, and few of them with points of doctrine or practices of morality. Their number, too, proves the labour expended on this great subject. They are collected from all the different manuscripts written long previous to the discovery of printing ; and still the least accurate manuscript of the New Testament

we possess does not contain a single deviation from the received text which would vitiate one vital and essential truth. Where an alteration occurs it is seen to be an error in transcribing, by finding the point affected by it distinctly recorded in other passages of Scripture. This is plain, that were all Griesbach's readings incorporated into the sacred text, neither Infidelity, nor Socinianism, nor Romanism, would derive the least advantage.

But were the New Testament to disappear from the earth, it has been ascertained that nearly the whole of its contents could be gathered from the writings of the controversialists of the first five centuries. The very disputes which we deplore in one respect are thus the means not only of preserving the sacred text, but of rendering its corruption on either side impossible without detection.

All this is manifest proof, that a great presiding Power must have superintended the safety and transmission of the word of God ; so that while it has passed through more dangers, encountered more difficulties, been scrutinized by more enemies, and more keenly, than any other book under heaven, yet it is of all books the most perfect, of all

ancient productions the most unmutilated and entire.

There is still another proof of Christianity having begun at the period assigned to it; that presented by the sacraments and institutions recorded in the New Testament. Let us refer to the Sabbath. As far back as the seventh century, we find it observed all over the Christian world. In the second century it prevails over the Roman empire, is noticed by Justin Martyr and others, as introduced by Christ, and in consequence of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Now if any one had composed the New Testament at a subsequent period, instituting at that period the observance of the Sabbath as a duty, would not thousands have protested against the innovation? Would they not have said, it is a novelty? But none say so; the son received it from his father, and the father from his sires, and they from the apostles, who recorded as they received the sacred institute. We cannot name a century in which the sacraments were not publicly solemnized; and every time we now behold baptism administered, or the Lord's Supper observed, we have dumb but expressive proof

of the true original and date of our most holy faith.

If we refer not merely to infidels, such as Porphyry and Julian the Apostate—or to Christian writers, such as the historians of the Bible and the early fathers—but to heathen writers—we shall find the most distinct and unqualified admission of the main facts recorded in the Bible. For instance, Tacitus,* Suetonius,† and Pliny,‡ three Roman writers, make (one or other) the most distinct admission of the historical facts that there was such a person as Christ, that he was crucified by the Jews, and that it was reported he rose again. If we refer to Macrobius, another Roman writer, we find

* Tacitus, A. D. 110, in his *Annals*, B. xv. chap. 44, thus writes, “Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperante per procuratorem, Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat.”—“The author of that name, or party, was Christ, who was punished with death by the Procurator, Pontius Pilate.”

† Suetonius, A. D. 116, chap. 25, on Claudius, writes, “Judæos impulsore Christo, assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit.”—“He expelled the Jews (or Christians, whose origin was Judea,) from Rome, for their continual tumults, instigated by Christ.”

‡ “Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem.”—“That they sing together, by turns, a hymn to Christ as to their God.”—*Pliny*, book x. page 97.

in him, as in Celsus, an account of the murder of the infants by Herod ; and in this writer also we have an account of the great gloom, or eclipse, that overspread all Palestine at the hour of the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. According to Eusebius, there were in his day the records of the trial and condemnation of Christ, in the archives of Rome, and accessible to all. He appeals to them as evidence. So likewise do Justin A. D. 140 ; and Tertullian, A. D. 200. Celsus and Porphyry, in the second and third centuries, quote verbatim from the New Testament facts they dispute, and passages we read in our churches Sabbath after Sabbath.

If then we take the testimony of Jewish, Christian, heathen, or infidel writers—of critics, or rites, as the observance of the Sabbath, and of the solemn sacraments ; we see that they simultaneously combine to demonstrate that Christianity existed in the first century as a matter of fact ; that the sacred books are in the present century verbatim as in the first, and were composed by the very men whose names are now appended to them in the English Bible. We have, in short, the whole Bible, Old and New Testament, precisely as it was composed by Moses,

and the Prophets, the evangelists and apostles, and all inspired of God; and the man who disbelieves the genuineness and authenticity and uncorrupted transmission of the Scriptures, notwithstanding the evidence we have given, must in consistency reject the genuineness of all works except those he sees written, and the authenticity of all records, except of facts he himself has witnessed.

CHAPTER V.

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

HAVING shown that the Bible is genuine and authentic, let me now try and ascertain if there be reason for believing that it is inspired.

The writers themselves claim inspiration. If they were not inspired, the Book is an awful lie, and its destruction would be a benefit. If they were not inspired, their assumption of it is inexplicable. If the apostles were bad men, it is quite clear they never would have spent their lives in inculcating the purest morality. If they were good men, they never would have palmed a falsehood on the world. The evidence is irresistible that they were good men; and if they are proved to be so, then their own declaration that they were inspired by the Spirit of God, before any judge or jury in the world, would be recognized as no mean proof. It may be said, perhaps they were deceived. But were they men likely to be

deceived? Were they fanatics? Were they wild enthusiasts? Did their conduct show that they were madmen? Do their writings show it? The very reverse is the fact. Nothing is more sensible, or more consistent, or more composed than the conduct, speeches, and writings of the apostles: and the argument that would prove they were madmen, or fanatics, would prove almost any absurdity.

The most impartial, acute, and honest men in all ages of the church have admitted the inspiration of the Scriptures. The apostolic fathers, the post-apostolic fathers, the ablest writers on such topics in subsequent ages, have with one consent held that this book is inspired of God. They had examined its credentials, they had heard from their forefathers what was their judgment on its claims, and the unanimous conclusion of successive thousands is, that the apostles were what they professed to be—inspired of the Spirit of God. This surely is entitled to some weight.

The morality of the Bible is so pure and lofty, that nothing but inspiration can account for it. Look at the wretched morality of the heathen; look at the equally wretched

morality of the Rabbinical Jew; and then mark the sublime and lofty morality of the Gospel, and say then if its holy and enduring and lofty ethics do not proclaim, trumpet-tongued, that God alone, the Author of all holiness, must have inspired and originated it. In the Bible we shall find, that some of the very words which the heathen employed to denote vices, are used to denote virtues, and admitted to be virtues by all sound moralists. The word *humble*, for instance, was the epithet of a coward among the Romans. To say that a man was *humilis*, was to say he was a craven and a coward. But in the Bible, to say that a man is *humble*, is the highest commendation of him. And every enlightened and righteous person in subsequent ages has admitted, that the Bible has redeemed the word from its gross corruption among the heathen, and restored it to its proper place in the temple of pure and lofty morality.

The doctrines of the Bible are so grand, so far above the reach of man's mind, that they alone proclaim the Bible inspired. It never entered into the mind of the most gifted of the heathen to conceive, still less to define, the doctrine of the Trinity. Such a doctrine

would not be invented by any writer of that age who designed to spread his name or tenets among the Greeks and Romans. But apart from this consideration, it does not look like human invention; it indicates an origin from above. It never entered into man's imagination to anticipate that God should be Man, and Man should be God. The Trinity and the Incarnation are doctrines which human thought could never have invented, and if dreamed of, never have hazarded.

The perfect harmony—harmony without unison—evidencing not a transcribing one from the other, but inspiration from a common source—existing among the sacred evangelists, is another evidence that they were inspired by the Spirit of God. They were men of different habits, of different degrees of education, living in different parts of the world, influenced by different circumstances, but all recording the same truths, announcing the same doctrines, and varying scarcely by a single jot or tittle. Infidels have ransacked every page, to discover discrepancies in the sacred volume; but each alleged discrepancy, when it came to be examined, turned out to be not only harmonious with the whole, but also a new proof of

the inspiration of the Scriptures. For instance, some fancied they had discovered a historical inaccuracy in the evangelist, when he says, that the High Priest at the crucifixion of our Lord was *Caiaphas*, for in the Jewish historian, Josephus, it is stated that the high priest that year was *Joseph*. Infidels vauntingly said, "Here is a declaration on the part of those who profess to be inspired, that Caiaphas was the high priest; but here is a dispassionate, because, they say, a disinterested historian, who says that it was Joseph. It is evident that one or other must be wrong;" and with the natural bias of scepticism, they determined that the evangelist must be wrong. But they were no less surprised than displeased, to find Josephus in a subsequent page recording that Joseph was also called Caiaphas; which evidently shows that the evangelist gave the right name, and that the difference was seeming, but not real. This is a specimen of the supposed discrepancies which the opponents of revelation profess to have discovered.

But the greatest evidence of all, by which the inspiration of the sacred penmen is proved, is the stupendous miracles with which their announcement of the Gospel

was universally attended. A miracle is Divine power setting its seal to Divine revelation. It is true, sceptics have exerted all their powers, in order to demonstrate that miracles are utterly impossible ; but not only have their demonstrations been completely overturned by the writings of Reid, Butler, Stewart, Campbell, Horsley, and others, but still more triumphant evidences, if these were necessary, have been educed of the reality of the miracles recorded in the Gospel. It has been found that Celsus and Porphyry, the sceptics, and even Mohammed, admitted in their days that miracles were performed by our Lord and his apostles. They did not deny the miracles, they only disputed the inferences drawn from them. Such attestations are most weighty. In more modern times, it has been said by infidels, that nature is fixed, and that we have no right to believe that miracles can have ever occurred. But who, or what, fixed nature? The will of God. And the same will that fixed nature in its frame-work, may transform, or change, or suspend the operations of nature when and where He pleases. Hume argues that all our knowledge of the phenomena of nature is derived from experi-

ence, and that our experience is uniformly against any miraculous occurrence. Uniform experience must be the experience of every individual of every age; but what we allege is, that the experience of certain witnesses in the apostolic age differed from ours, in that they witnessed what we have not witnessed—a miraculous interposition. And what we maintain is, that there is sufficient testimony in favour alike of the facts attested, and the credibility of the attesters. We are sometimes told that if we would show them a miracle then they would believe one, but that unless they actually see a miracle performed, they cannot believe one. But how absurd and inconsistent is such reasoning! It is as much as to say, show us Alexander the Great, and we will believe that such a monarch existed; show us Julius Cæsar, and we will believe that there was such a person; show us Bonaparte, and we will believe that he lived, and overran Europe with his victorious arms. We maintain that many miracles have been performed, and that there is ample and incontrovertible historical evidence that they were performed; and we call upon the infidel not to demand the re-performance of a miracle which could lead

to no good results, but to search into that historical evidence for miracles which does already exist. And if we prove that miracles were once performed, and performed in order to constitute credentials of this book, then there is plain evidence that God interposed, and set the imprimatur of his approval, the seal of his sanction, on the doctrines and precepts of the Bible. The wax attached to the lease or document, on which is struck the crest of the party, is valid at the end of centuries, and need not be repeated. So with a miracle.

An objection frequently adduced by infidels against miracles is, that there have been many false miracles; and therefore they cannot believe that there have been any true. They quote the lying legends of the church of Rome, and the ridiculous miracles, if miracles they can be called, that heathens profess to have seen or to have performed; and with these they allege that they must class the miracles of the New Testament. Surely all must see the absurdity of this reasoning. If, because there have been false miracles there never have been true ones, then by the same reasoning, because there have been bad shillings there never have been good

ones, and because there have been forged five-pound notes, there never have been real ones. In my judgment, the fact that there have been *false* miracles proves that there must have been sometimes *true* ones. Forgery always follows reality. But if the infidel say, that these miraculous pretensions in the sacred writers arise from that longing after the supernatural, which is found in man in every age, then I ask, who implanted this universal desire after the supernatural? If God implanted this thirst, would it not seem to imply that it was his design to gratify it at some period of his intercourse with man? We allege, however, that if we compare the miracles recorded in the New Testament, with the miracles recorded in the fables of heathenism, we shall find the contrast so decided, that no doubt will remain that the latter bear the proofs of palpable imposition, while about the former there are such tokens of majesty, benevolence, and power, that every dispassionate spectator must admit, "Truly this was the finger of God." I have in my hand at this moment a book containing an account of a number of ancient and modern miracles, said to be performed by priests in the dark ages; but they are so ab-

surd, and most of them so utterly uncalled for, and so unproductive of any good result, that at the very first blush we must perceive they are lying legends. Lord Shrewsbury's Adoloratas, and the effects of the miraculous medal of Mary, which are recent pseudo-miracles, are mere fanatical absurdities. But in the miracles of the Scriptures, we see such evidence of power, of noble and benevolent design, such pure and superhuman doctrine accompanying them, that we are constrained to acknowledge, that these miracles denote the interposition of Almighty power, as the doctrine they attest implies the interposition of sovereign and glorious grace.

If, in short, Christianity be not from God, whence is it? This is a most important question. If we compare the morality of the Bible with that of the most celebrated productions of heathen philosophers, we shall find that the moral instructions of Jesus are so different from the morality of Plato, the precepts of the one so infinitely loftier than all the maxims of the other, the views of God enunciated by the Son of Mary so sublime and magnificent, and the views broached even by a Socrates so paltry and unworthy in comparison, that we must come to the

conclusion that Christianity is *not at least an offshoot from heathenism*. Can we trace it, then, to Judaism? Did it evolve from it merely? If we will compare the miserable traditions of the Jews with the lofty and pure statements of the New Testament—or the most celebrated sayings of the most celebrated Rabbis with the simple and majestic announcements of Jesus, or the ceremonial and carnal administration of the Levitical ages with the “life and immortality” that are clearly brought to light through the Gospel—we must come to the conclusion, that Christianity is *not the offspring of mere Judaism*. Then whence can this pure, this exalted, this sanctifying system have originated? It came not from heathens; it is too pure to have sprung from such an origin. It came not from Judaism; it is too spiritual and exalted to have emanated directly and immediately thence. Then, whence came it? I can see no other rational conclusion than that Christianity came immediately from God.

It was not a gradual introduction, progressively ripened; but it shot up at once in all the blossom of unprecedented loveliness—in all the beauty and fertility of great and good

fruit—in the midst of the surrounding blighted and moral desert. It came into the world amid the gloom of human apostasy, like the sun bursting upon the darkness of midnight. It presented itself in the majesty of perfect manhood; a thing so utterly apart from the world—so obviously superior to the world—so evidently from above—that that mind indicates the greatest rationality and the least credulity, which believes the Scriptures to be a revelation from God.

Rousseau was constrained to acknowledge, “The majesty of Scripture strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers; with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible are they compared with the Scriptures. Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man? The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.”—*Works*, vol. v. p. 215.

CHAPTER VI.

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

Is the Bible inspired? is, perhaps, the most important question that can be asked. What is the Bible? That book which is no longer the monopoly of a few, but the possession and the privilege of the million. It begins with Genesis and ends with Revelation. It rejects the additions of the Romanist, and refuses the subtractions of the Socinian. Moses, Isaiah, John, Paul, and Peter, are but the trumpets; God only is the speaker. It has variety of style, but oneness of thought; the varied inflexions of many voices, but the one breath in all; the idiosyncrasies of men in its outward manifestation, but the inspiration of God in its inward vitality and substance. It is so common, so wide spread, that the sun never sets on its gleaming page. The east is opening it while the west is closing it. Its words go round the world like sweet music, and increasing generations, right or wrong

believe it to be what they call it—the book of God!

I have referred to the argument from miracles. It alone is evidence of inspiration. We have incontrovertible testimony to the occurrence of miracles. The wheels of creation ceased their action that men might hear God. The suspension of its laws was the evidence of the interposition of God, and if such suspension took place in order to call man's attention to what proclaims itself God's word, then is the Bible inspired. Omnipotent power is the pedestal of inspired truth. The hand of God visibly holds the lamp of life divine. No need is there of repetition. The incessant repetition of a miracle would destroy its value.

A powerful proof of the inspiration of the Bible cumulative with years, is prophecy. Two objections, destructive of each other, are adduced against it.

The first is, that all the prophecies of the Old Testament are so obscure, that we can make them speak any thing.

No honest man, who reads the predictions recorded in the Psalms—in the prophets, in the fifty-third of Isaiah, for instance, or those contained in the prophet Malachi—and com-

pare them with the fulfilment recorded in the New Testament—can fairly say that they are so obscure, as to be capable of being tortured or twisted in any way. One remarkable proof of this is the fact, that many of the Jews are so conscious of the exact delineation of Jesus of Nazareth in the fifty-third of Isaiah, that they have strained every nerve, and exerted every effort, and exhausted the resources of absurdity, to prove that that chapter was not originally in the book of Isaiah: an effort as hopeless as it is wicked.

The next objection is of a very opposite description.—That the prophecies respecting the Messiah have evidently been foisted into the Old Testament by Christians, subsequent to the events.

Now we have seen that the translations which have been made from the Scriptures in every age, the Greek Septuagint for instance, made at least three hundred years before the advent of Christ; the fact that our Lord never charged the Jews with mutilating the Old Testament—the extracts from the Sacred Scriptures contained in a variety of books and documents—the quotations embosomed in the folios of the fathers, word for word as

in our Bible—all go to prove, that the charge that any book or chapter has been foisted in is utterly untenable.

But is it not a most curious fact, that one infidel says they are so obscure that we cannot make any thing of them, and another infidel says that they are so plain and clear that they must have been foisted in at a subsequent period? May we not quote both the objectors as auxiliaries in our defence? When one thus contradicts another, it shows that the cause is not altogether of the most tenable kind.

A prophecy was delivered two thousand years before the advent of Christ, that the descendants of Shem and of Japheth should be civilized and enlightened, and that the descendants of Ham should be servants of servants, or slaves to their latest posterity. All this has been to the very letter fulfilled. We find the descendants of Japheth in Europe, and the descendants of Shem in Asia. Now the Europeans, Asiatics, the Eastern and Western Empires, or the Greeks and the Romans, are admitted by all to be, as they long have been, the most enlightened nations of mankind. But we find the descendants of Ham at this moment slaves and bondmen;

not merely in the West Indies, as recently, but even now to a greater extent than ever could have been believed, as has been too truly and painfully proved by the late Mr. Buxton, in his work written expressly upon this subject. The descendants of Ham are slaves up to the present period; thereby giving at this day the most palpable and yet unconscious fulfilment of a prediction delivered more than four thousand years ago.

It was said of Ishmael that his descendants should be "wild-ass men," that their hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against them, that they should be unsettled and dwell in tents. Now any traveller or historian will testify, that the descendants of Ishmael at this moment are the wandering Arabs; in whose case and condition we have the literal and exact fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, upwards of four thousand years old.

If we take the predictions respecting Babylon and Nineveh in Isaiah and Jeremiah on the one hand, and what Infidel as well as Christian travellers have described in their writings on the other, we shall see that every prophecy has been fulfilled, not merely in

the bulk, but even in its jots and tittles, in the destruction of those cities.

Full four thousand years ago, and at subsequent periods, prophecies were delivered and are recorded in Scripture, respecting the future condition of the Jews. It was said, that they should be long “without a sacrifice and without an ephod and without an altar;” that they should be scattered, and yet distinct and separate, in all nations; that they should be “a scoff and a by-word” amid all the kingdoms of the earth. Is not this fulfilled before our eyes? Is not every Jew that walks the streets, a dumb and reluctant witness to the truth of the word of God?

There is a prophecy respecting the Church of Rome in the New Testament, of a most minute character, uttered eighteen centuries ago. Let us compare with it what are the known and avowed doctrines of that awful apostasy, and we shall see it exactly fulfilled. “The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way”—(that is, the Roman emperor will prevent its development, until he be overturned;) “and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall

consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness and unrighteousness in them that perish.” And again, in the first epistle of Paul to Timothy:—“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith” (implying that they had formerly been of the faith;) “giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils” (of demons, that is, of men canonized;) “speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their consciences seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” The Rev. Mr. Nangle, a Protestant minister in the island of Achill, stated in his interesting periodical, called *The Achill Herald*, that on one of his fellow-labourers, a Christian minister, reading this passage to a number of Roman Catholics in that island, they replied—“This evidently describes our clergy, but you have a printing-press in the island, and you must have put this into the Bible in

order to fasten it upon our clergy." This a striking testimony to the fact, that the prophecy is a true and natural delineation of that dreadful and antichristian apostasy, of which they were the victims. If we refer to the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Apocalypse we shall find a still more expanded description of that superstition. Each prediction in which the apostle Paul and the evangelist John so minutely described and predicted that apostasy, proves they wrote under the inspiration and guidance of Him who saw the future as clearly as the present.

I might also refer to the seven Churches of Asia, which have been preserved or destroyed, more or less perpetuated or swept away, according to the extent of the promise or the threatening contained in the second and third chapters of the book of the Revelation. Thus do Tyre from its bleak strand, and Babylon from its molten masses, Sodom and Gomorrah from their ashes, Nineveh from its rocks, on which the fishermen now bleach their nets, the Jew on our streets, the African in his chains, the Cossack on his steppes, and the Arab in his tent, the Church of Rome in her apostasy, and the Church of

Christ in her brightening glory, Judah desolate, and Israel scattered and peeled—*all, all*, proclaim with simultaneous and irresistible force, that the Bible is the book of God—that “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”—that “Thy word is truth.”

We must now specially turn, but as briefly as the nature of the subject will allow, to the predictions contained in the Old Testament Scriptures in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Every feature which was predicted of the Lord Jesus Christ by ancient prophets was realized and found in Him, and in Him alone, when He appeared in the world. I will merely state two or three points. The first prophecy is, that the Messiah should come. We find this in the promise that “the woman’s seed should bruise the head of the serpent;” that “the glory of the Lord should be revealed;” that “the desire of all nations should come.” The fulfilment we have in the New Testament. We read also, in the forty-ninth of Genesis, the *time* when He should come—“The sceptre shall not depart out of Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come;” and also that He was to come at a time of uni-

versal peace, and while the second temple was standing, and 490 years after the rebuilding of Jerusalem. All this, which was matter of ancient prophecy, was literally fulfilled. Again, it was *predicted*, that the Messiah should be God and man together. It was said to Him, "Thou art my Son," and the Jews showed that by the title, "Son of God," they understood essential Deity; and again, "He shall come forth, whose goings forth have been of old and for ever;" and also it was *predicted*, that He should be descended from the woman, from Abraham, from Jacob, from David. The fulfilment was, when "in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem" us. It was *predicted*, moreover, that He should be born of a virgin; "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." And this was fulfilled. The place where He was to be born was stated: "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel." And this was exactly fulfilled. A prophet, in the spirit and power of Elias, was to precede Him; thus in Malachi—"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." And

this was claimed by Christ and the Baptist, as a prediction and portrait of them. It was *predicted* also, that the Messiah was to be a prophet; "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee," the Almighty said to Moses. And "the woman said to Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet;" and again, in John, "Of a truth this is *that* prophet;" and in Matthew, "They took Him for a prophet;" all, fulfilments of the prediction. It was *predicted* how He should make His public entry into Jerusalem—"riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." This was verbatim fulfilled. It was *predicted*, that the Messiah should be poor and despised, and betrayed by one of His disciples for thirty pieces of silver. This was literally fulfilled. It was *predicted*, that Messiah should suffer pain and death for the sins of the world. This was literally fulfilled. It was *predicted*, that vinegar and gall should be offered to Him upon the cross, and that His garments should be divided, and lots cast whose they should be. This was literally and exactly fulfilled. It was *predicted*, that "not a bone" of the Messiah should be broken. This was literally and exactly fulfilled. It was *predicted*, that

the Messiah should rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. This was literally fulfilled. That He was to enlighten men, that He was called to be the anointed of God, that He was to offer Himself a sacrifice for sin, that He was to be a Saviour, that He was to be a Mediator, that He was to be an Intercessor, that He was to be a King, that He was to be the Head and Ruler of the Church, that He was to be exalted after his sufferings—*all these things were predicted*, some of them 400 years, some of them 2,000 years previous to the time when they actually took place; and now, when we recollect that these predictions seemed to be contradictory of each other, and when we see, nevertheless, that the seeming contradictions all meet and are harmonized in the person of the Lord of glory, is it not a far greater task upon credulity to suppose that the prophets wrote at random, than it is to believe that they were inspired by God, to whom past, present, and future are transparent, and wrote under the influence of the Holy Ghost? Suppose that at Berlin a man made a finger, that at St. Petersburg another made a thumb, and a third in another place an arm, a fourth in London made a hand, that in Edinburgh a

fifth made a toe, that at Inverness a sixth made a foot, that in Dublin a seventh made a head, that every member of the human body was made of marble in distant places, in different and distant times, and that at a certain period the sculptors assembled in London, and that when they tried to put together these different limbs, all made in different places and at different times, and without any communication, they formed that masterpiece of genius, the Apollo Belvidere, now seen on the Continent, what could we infer? That they had a common archetype, that a great presiding architect must have actuated every hand, guided every chisel, instructed every sculptor. Now this is literally realized in the predictions and appearance of Jesus Christ. Prophets, at different times, in different parts of the world, described His various features in various terms and various forms; and though they seemed before the fulfilment to contradict each other, yet when Christ comes it is found that every feature is realized in Him; and He is the only and exclusive being in whom all can converge and be perfectly illustrated. Is it possible to conceive that the prophets wrote at random? is it possible to believe

that it was by mere chance that they pictured the future Christ? That man indicates the greatest amount of common sense, as well as the soundest philosophy, who concludes that they spake and wrote as they were guided and directed by the Spirit of God.

There was also a series of predictions delivered by our Lord himself. He gave a most minute description of the fearful judgments that were to overtake Jerusalem, and the sad severities which were to be exercised upon its doomed and guilty inhabitants, about forty years before its downfall. This is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Our Lord's first prediction was, that when the time drew near, "many should come in His name, saying, I am Christ; and should deceive many." Now Josephus, who neither embraced the Gospel, nor was favourable to Christianity, relates that, prior to the capture of Jerusalem, "the land was overrun with magicians, seducers, and apostates, who drew the people after them in multitudes, into solitudes and deserts to see signs and miracles. Among these apostates were Dositheus the Samaritan, who claimed to be Christ—Simon Magus, who said he was the Son of God—

and Theudas, who pretended to be a prophet." This prophecy of our Lord was, therefore, literally fulfilled. The second predicted sign was, that wars and commotions should precede the destruction of Jerusalem; and these wars and commotions Josephus states took place. Four emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, suffered violent deaths within the short space of eighteen months; and the emperor Caligula commanded his statue to be set up in the temple, and in consequence of the refusal of the Jews, he threatened them with an invasion, which was prevented by death. There was also a prediction that "nation should rise up against nation." This took place in almost every quarter of the Roman empire, and is recorded by Josephus. At Alexandria the old enmity was revived between the Jews and the heathens, and the Jews perished by thousands; the people of Damascus conspired against the Jews; the Jews who dwelt at Perea against the people that dwelt at Philadelphia, and the whole nation of the Jews against the Romans. The third prophecy of our Lord was, "famines and pestilences" before the destruction of Jerusalem. And Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, and Euse

bis record, that famines and pestilences occurred in divers places, and of a very fearful character, precisely as we find it predicted. The fourth sign was, "earthquakes." These literally took place before the destruction of Jerusalem; one in Crete in the reign of Claudius, and others at Smyrna, Samos, Miletus, and other places in which the Jews were settled. Many cities were overthrown, and among others the celebrated city of Pompeii was almost demolished by an earthquake. These facts are recorded by heathen historians. The fifth prophecy of our Lord was, fearful sights and signs from heaven. And Josephus says, "There broke out a prodigious storm in the night with the utmost violence — lightnings and rains; and these things (adds Josephus) were a manifest indication that some destruction was coming upon men, when the system of this world was thrown into such disorder." The same historian (not a *Christian*, but a *Jew*,) says, that a star hung over the city like a sword, and a comet continued over it for a whole year; also that when the people were assembled to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house that it appeared to be

bright day-time, and this continued for half an hour. At the same feast the eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass, and was very heavy, and was scarcely shut in an evening by twenty men, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, was seen to be opened of its own accord about midnight. Moreover, before the setting of the sun, there were seen all over the sky chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour fighting in the clouds and surrounding cities; also at the feast of Pentecost, as the priests were going into the inner temple, they heard a voice as of a multitude crying, "Let us depart hence." And Josephus records it as more terrible than all, that an ordinary country fellow went about the city day and night, crying out, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple." The magistrates endeavoured by stripes to restrain him, but he still cried with a mournful voice, at every stroke of the whip, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem and the temple." These are some of the fearful signs and great sights from heaven which our Lord had predicted. Dr. Jortin remarks on these—"If Christ had not foretold this, many who give little need

to portents would have supposed that Josephus exaggerated, and that Tacitus was misinformed; but as the testimonies of Josephus and Tacitus confirm the predictions of Christ, so the predictions of Christ confirm the wonders recorded by these historians." And further; another sign predicted by our Lord was the persecution of Christians; and this we have recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Another was, the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world. This fact is also recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; and also by heathen historians. It is supposed, upon very good evidence, that the Apostle Paul visited England and Scotland, and preached the Gospel there. The Christian fathers state that the ploughmen in the fields in every land were found singing the Psalms of David and the songs of the Gospel. Again; it was predicted by our Lord that Jerusalem should be besieged by the Roman armies. "Ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not;" "the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side." "The abomination of desolation" was the Roman army; and Jose-

phus records, that those warriors brought the Roman standard, the eagle, into the midst of the temple and into the sacred place. A trench, says Josephus, was dug round about Jerusalem, and of it he gives a very minute and particular account. In the next place, Christ enjoined the Christians that should be in Jerusalem to “flee into the mountains,” and escape when they saw these things. And accordingly it is recorded that Cæstius Gailus came against Jerusalem with a powerful army, with which he might have taken it; but, contrary to expectation, and without reason, removed away from it, and immediately afterwards many of the principal Jewish people left the city, like a sinking ship; and a few years after, when Vespasian was drawing near Jerusalem, great multitudes ran and escaped for safety to the mountains and to Pella. Our Lord also predicted, that false Christs and false prophets should arise, and should show great signs and wonders, and this actually occurred. Moreover our Lord described the miseries that should befall the Jews at that time. He says—“These are the days of vengeance; woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall be great distress in

the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations." Josephus says—"All the calamities which have befallen any nation from the beginning of the world were but small in comparison with those which befell the Jews; within the city, the fury was so great, that they filled the temple itself with continual slaughter; nay, to such a height did their madness rise, that they destroyed the granaries of corn which should have sustained them; all reverence to age and the ties of parent and child were annihilated; children snatched the half-baked morsels which the fathers were eating out of their mouths, and mothers snatched the morsels from their children also, and the young men wandered about the market places like shadows, and fell down dead through hunger and famine." At length the famine became so extreme, that they devoured what the most sordid animals refused. A woman of distinguished rank, in hunger and desperation, killed and roasted her own babe from her breast, and had eaten one half of it before the horrid deed was detected. Others fell by the edge of the sword. At Scythopolis and Cesarea above

50,000 fell; at another gate 2,000 fell, at another gate 2,000 fell; at Ptolemais, 2,000; at Damascus 10,000; and Josephus records, that altogether, of different ages and sexes, 1,357,630 Jews were destroyed and butchered in various parts of Palestine and about Jerusalem. Lastly, our Lord predicted the total destruction of Jerusalem: "Your house shall be left unto you desolate; there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down; Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." Now, Josephus states the leading facts of the fulfilment of this prophecy. Our Saviour's words were literally fulfilled, even when royalty tried to prevent it. Titus was very desirous of preserving the temple; he had expressed the like desire of preserving the city too, and repeatedly sent Josephus the historian and other Jews to persuade them to surrender. The Jews themselves set fire to the gates, through which the Romans were endeavouring to force an entrance, and one of the soldiers threw a burning brand into a window of the temple; the flames soon spread, and the people and the soldiers rushed to the spot, shouting and fighting. Titus hastened to the place, calling to the soldiers to quench

the fire, but they either could not hear or would not hear, and those behind encouraged those before them to set other parts on fire. Titus then, supposing that the interior might yet be saved, ordered the crowd of soldiers to be beaten back; but their anger and their hatred of the Jews and a certain vehement fury overcame their reverence for their commander, and one of them threw the fire within, where the flames then burst forth, and thus the whole temple was burnt down even contrary to the will of Cæsar: as if not one jot or tittle of our Lord's word should pass away, until all should be fulfilled.

You have thus heard the prophecies of our Lord upon the one hand, and the fulfilment of them on the other—that fulfilment not recorded by a Christian, whose testimony might be suspected by the infidel, but by Josephus, a Jew, a distinguished general in the service of Titus and Vespasian, and one of the most impartial and honest historians that ever wrote at any period of time. We here see one that was the poor son of a carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth, without friends, without rank, without human learning, without aught of the advantages or accomplishments of the world, standing up in the sight

of a most magnificent temple, a temple so vast that Alexander the Great, it is said, impressed with its magnificence, declared that it must be the residence of a god, and proclaiming that in one generation, in thirty years, "not one stone should be left upon another," and giving the minutiae of the onset, the siege, and the slaughter; and after the interval of thirty years, all was literally and exactly fulfilled. Must He not either have been God, or have spoken under the direction of the purpose and foreknowledge of God? We established in a former chapter that the books are genuine and authentic; that is to say, that they were written by those whose names they bear, and that there has been no foisting of any one passage into the sacred books, which was not written by the sacred penman. It was one of our proofs of this, that after they were written they were translated into various languages, into Syriac and Latin, and quoted by the fathers; and never, let it be noted, has the charge been made, that these prophecies respecting Jerusalem were interpolated. If there had been the shadow of a pretence for it, the charge would have been reiterated a thousand times. I do then assert that the

predictions of the prophets respecting our Lord, and the predictions of our Lord respecting the desolation of once proud and glorious Jerusalem, have been so exactly and literally fulfilled, even by the testimony of disinterested parties, that there cannot be a shadow of doubt, that God's finger is there, and that God's sanction and seal lie upon the face of the sacred volume.

Having looked at these prophecies, we may ask again which is the most credulous—the man who believes that all this was the mere random and fortuitous result of chance and sagacious conjecture? or the man who holds that all these predictions were penned by the inspiration of God? The infidel pretends to be a freethinker; he boasts, that while we are the mere slaves of education, mere credulous fanatics, he is a freethinker. He is *not* a freethinker; he is the victim of gross credulity. I claim to be myself a freethinker; I think for myself, and read, and infer from evidence. The infidel, instead of being a freethinker, is a slave to his prejudices and passions.

“He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside.”

In looking at the opposers of Christianity, after all, it is natural to ask, What are the attainments and what is the character of those men, who (especially in these days) make a parade of objections to the Scriptures? Are they the Newtons, the Keplers, the Stewarts, and the Lockes, and the Bacons of the world? Not at all; but men who have occasionally peeped through a telescope, and then have learned to tell us that the stars contain no proof that there is a God; men who have once in their life looked through a microscope, and then come to tell us that its revelations are not proofs of Deity and design. Yet such are the men, that stand up with an effrontery unparalleled, and tell us that all evidence is useless, that all claims are inadmissible, that Robert Owen is a better man than the apostle Paul, and the filthy abominations of Socialism more worthy of the acceptance of sinners than the inspiration of the holy and blessed Jesus. A simple contrast between the writings of the one and the writings of the other, between the men who lead the armies of infidelity and those who are the advocates of our holy faith, will at once demonstrate which has God upon its side, and which

indicates the possession of the true knowledge of His will.

There is still another decisive proof of the divinity of the Gospel, worthy of our attention; viz. the character of Jesus Christ.

Suppose that the history of Christ had been pressed upon our notice in the present day for the first time in our life. After we have read the characteristics of the age in which He lived, the expectations of His countrymen, the leading and popular theology of the day, we read minutely and study exactly the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. What do we find? We see a character utterly unlike the age, entirely above and beyond it; evidently *in* the world, but palpably not *of* the world, nor in any respect the product of the world. We behold His countrymen, the Jews, looking for a temporal prince to sit upon a temporal throne, and to sway a literal sceptre; and we hear Christ telling them that all such expectations are absurd—that “the pure in heart shall see God,” that “the peace-makers shall be called the children of God,” that “they that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.” In the midst of a nation, that believed that the Messiah should be restrict-

ed wholly to themselves, that His blessings never should go beyond the hills of Carmel or the banks of the Jordan, we hear Christ stating, that all nations are to taste of His goodness—that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” We behold, also, in the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, no assumption of any circumstantial superiority to the rest of his countrymen. He was born of a lowly woman, brought up in the carpenter’s shop and by the carpenter’s knee, and educated probably at the village school. He walks with the rest of the striplings of His day, having no university education, having never sat at the feet of a learned Rabbi, possessing no noble, or royal, or national patronage; and yet He promulgates doctrines, that the mightiest masters among the prophets never even dreamed of. He prescribes precepts so pure and exalted, that the more they are analyzed and tested the more do men become impressed with their heavenly origin. He proclaims a faith that was to embrace all nations, and a kingdom “not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” We

see in Christ nothing of the fanatic. If a fanatic, and impostor, He would have availed Himself of the popular theology, and have turned the notions of the Jews to account—for this is the nearest way to rapid popularity; but instead of this, He contradicts all their notions, and sends His word like a ploughshare through their most beloved prejudices; every word He utters in the fifth of John is a death-blow to their heart-woven fancies. How was this character formed? Whence came this most awful, and yet magnificent specimen of “whatsoever things are just, pure, true, lovely,” sublime? Whence his birth? Whence His origin? How will you account for this upon any other representations than those of the word of God? There is nothing of the impostor about him. A deceiver of the world, assuming to be something, puts on a peculiar dress; he affects certain eccentricities and oddities; he draws a line between him and the vulgar; runs into his palace, or his hall, or hovel, and assumes a mysterious dignity, a significant silence. But Christ puts on no such artificial assumptions. He wears the fisherman’s dress. He sits down at the table of Peter. He associates, for holy ends, with publicans and sinners.

He reasons with them constantly, "here a little and there a little." When the rich men came and offered Him their riches, He refused them; when He might have made Himself a king, He would have nothing to do with a crown; and if we desire to behold the loveliness and glory of Christ's character concentrated into one bright spot, it was upon that occasion when He took the smiling babes from the mothers' breasts, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." How can we account for such a character at such a period, and among such a people, except upon the principles that are asserted in the sacred volume? Must we not conclude, in the words of unsophisticated nature, as poured through the centurion's lips at the foot of the cross—"Truly this was the Son of God?"

There is one other fact, namely, the rapid progress of Christianity throughout the world, which is possessed of no little weight in this discussion.

Here was a doctrine opposed to the prejudices of men—in the very teeth of the popular and prevailing morality. The very things which the Romans had baptized as virtues,

Christianity denounced as vices. Here was a system, preached not by those who walked on the banks of the Ilissus, or by the academy, or by the proud philosophers of the *Stoa* ; but by fishermen—by ministers, with two exceptions, illiterate, untaught, and unpolished, called the Apostles. It was a doctrine opposed to men's darling lusts, and to their dearest prejudices ; propounded without eloquence, and carried forward without patronage. There was neither State connexion, nor crown to irradiate them, no throne to back them, nor magistracy to aid them. And yet this doctrine, opposed to men's popular feelings, their prejudices, and their lusts, preached by fishermen without eloquence, without countenance, without patronage, royal or noble, so rapidly spread and so widely prevailed, that the whole Roman empire came to be leavened with it ; and at length the once degraded cross sparkled in the diadems of emperors ; and the name of Christian came to be the ornament and the boast of grateful millions. How shall we account for so rapid a progress of so unpopular principles, preached by so unlikely instruments ?

Gibbon, the infidel, has tried, but most impotently tried, to account for its spread, upon

what he calls second causes, among which he mentions the "inflexible and intolerant zeal of the first Christians; derived (it is true) from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit, which instead of inviting the Gentiles, had deterred them." But how was it intolerant? Did they use the faggot? Gibbon dare not say it. Did they have recourse to the sword? This was never charged. Wherein did the intolerance consist? It was in this; they would not consent that Christ should be enrolled as one of the *Dii minores* in the Pantheon. They required that He should either have the whole temple or have none. What they asserted was, that Christianity is either absolute and all, or nothing; that it must reign in supreme and absolute monarchy, or its ministers must die devoted martyrs. It is still the same; it will have no compromise; it admits of none. But, says Gibbon, it spread by the inflexible zeal of its advocates; but how came it to be received at first? It spread by their zeal, it is true; but mere zeal will never permanently promote a religious system. Joanna Southcote had abundance of zeal; but what has been her success? Mere zeal never can permanently sustain a system, unless there

be some portion of truth in it ; still less can zeal invent a system that will hold together for any length of time. Gibbon's next secondary cause of the progress of Christianity is—"The doctrine of a future life improved by every additional circumstance that can give efficacy and importance to it." Now how would the doctrine of a future life promote a system among those who did not believe it? The Romans would say, when they heard the doctrine of a future life—"It is very welcome, but what is the evidence of it?" The Apostles, therefore, must have stated evidence of the future life ; else the fact itself or the creed that embosomed it could not have been received. His next cause is—"The supernatural gifts they possessed, which must have conduced to their own comfort, and the comfort of those around them." Supernatural gifts? Does the infidel admit that their gifts were supernatural? He did so because he could not do otherwise. If they were not supernatural, how could they conduce to "their own comfort?" If I am practising conscious imposture, that can never conduce to my comfort. But if the miracles had been mere pieces of legerdemain, the Greeks and Romans were too shrewd to be imposed upon

by them. Another cause, he says, was the pure morality of those who preached these doctrines. And was it merely the pure and lofty morality of the teachers, that convinced the mind of the truth of their doctrines? How sublime must such morality be! Another cause was "their preaching repentance of past sins, and the laudable desire of supporting the honour of the cause in which they were engaged." Now how could this convert Pagans? Would it not repel them? One can see no connexion between the premises and the conclusion; but the very reverse. Surely the desire of supporting the honour of a society must imply that that society was founded on what is good; but how such preaching of repentance, and the desire of supporting the society with which they were connected, could convert infidels—is a deduction of inferences from premises, such as we cannot admit to be warranted by the ordinary laws of logic.

The miraculous preservation of the Bible is no feeble proof of God being its author and protector.

The ancient Greek and Latin classics, which minister to man's lusts, and chime in with man's fallen propensities, have all of

them been more or less mutilated or lost. But the Bible, which rebukes man in truth's own undaunted tones, which man hates because it "prophesies evil concerning him," if he continue in his sins, remains perfectly whole and entire. Now how does it happen, that the books which men cherished with parental solicitude are mutilated or lost, and that the book which men would have been generally too glad to have exterminated and destroyed is perfectly preserved? Were a man to come into an assembly in 1847, who had survived eighteen centuries of persecution, who had been cast into the seas, but was not drowned, who had been thrown into the fires, but was not burned, who had been flung to wild beasts, but was not destroyed, to whom prussic acid had been administered, but he had not died, who had been buried, and yet was not smothered; would you not say, God must have sustained this man by a continuous miracle? My dear reader, **THIS BOOK IS THAT MAN.** The power of kings, the pride of nobles, the prejudices of priests, whatever learning could snatch from the arsenals of the past, or wit invent, or wickedness wield, have been hurled against it, and all have recoiled broken, and lie as trophies

at its feet. As soon may the cawing of the sea-bird uproot the rocks of the sea, or a swarm of wasps overturn the oak, as any assaults overthrow Christianity.

“Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers ;
But Error wounded writhes with pain,
And dies amid her worshippers.”

It has been buried in the floods, and it is not lost ; it has been thrown into the fires, yet it is not burned ; it has been exposed to the pestilential notes of a corrupt and superstitious faith, and yet it is not poisoned ; and now, in the nineteenth century, does it come forth from all the opposition and the persecution of eighteen centuries, to which it has been subjected, in all its primitive integrity—as virgin gold cast into the furnace, more bright and beautiful by far than when it entered.

But perhaps after all the evidences we have adduced, the most satisfactory is that contained in the words—“Come and see, and taste ;” that is, the *experimental evidence*.

If we can only bring men to make trial of the Gospel, they will soon feel its Divine original. If we visit the hills and valleys,

the glens and grey moors of Scotland, and enter any of the cottages of her people, and ask the pariaich of the village, "How came you to the belief that that book called the Bible is the book of God? You never read the Evidences of a Paley, or the Analogy of a Butler, you never studied the Credibility of a Lardner, you never followed the eloquent demonstrations of a Chalmers; how came you to believe it?"—"Come to believe it!" would the peasant say; "I have *felt* it in my heart and conscience to be the book of God; it has taught me truths I never knew before, it has given me a peace the world could not give, it has calmed my beating heart, it has stanchd my bleeding wounds when the world was all bitterness and Marah, it has made all things new. Not the book of God? I have felt its power and tasted its sweetness; I am as convinced of it, as that I am here a living, breathing man."

To give in one illustration a summary of all this evidence. Suppose that an individual, long an invalid, has been restored to perfect health and strength by means of a tonic prescribed by some physician; and that tonic port wine. A visitor comes to this recovered man, and says, "It is not port wine that you

have been taking, it has been water from the ditch." What would be his probable reply? He might justly say, "I will convince you from three distinct sources, that what I am taking is port wine." First, he brings the wine merchant; and the wine merchant states, that he saw the grapes in the vineyard, he saw them prepared in the wine press, the wine put into the cask, drawn off into bottles, and placed in the chamber of the invalid. That is external evidence. He next calls the chemist; and the chemist says, he has subjected the wine to the usual and appropriate tests, and he is sure it is port wine. That is internal evidence. But the third witness is himself; and he says—"I can add the experimental to these evidences; I was reduced to the verge of the grave by debility, and this has raised me up, renewed my vigour, imparted strength to my constitution. I am persuaded that it is not water, but an efficacious tonic that I have taken." So can many say of the Gospel. The external and internal evidences are important; but I must say, the most triumphant evidence is when one can declare—"The book must be the book of God, for I the widow have found in it a glorious Husband, I the

orphan have found in it an everlasting Father, I the broken-hearted have found in it a healing balm, I the guilty have found in it forgiveness, I the distracted have found in it peace, I the pilgrim and the stranger have found in it a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. Thy word, O God, is truth." Can a lie regenerate souls?

Suffer me now to conclude by setting before you two creeds, that have been promulgated and preached among mankind.

The first is *The creed of the infidel*:—

"I believe that there is no God, but that matter is God, and God is matter; and that it is no matter whether there is any God or not. I believe also that the world was not made, but that the world made itself, or that it had no beginning, and that it will last for ever. I believe that man is a beast; that the soul is the body, and that the body is the soul; and that after death there is neither body nor soul. I believe that there is no religion, that natural religion is the only religion, and all religion unnatural. I believe not in Moses; I believe in the first philosophers. I believe not in the evangelists; I believe in Chubb, Collins, Toland, Tindal, Hobbes. I believe in Lord Boling-

broke, and I believe not in St. Paul. I believe not in revelation; I believe in tradition. I believe in the Talmud; I believe in the Koran; I believe not in the Bible. I believe in Socrates; I believe in Confucius; I believe in Mahomet; I believe not in Christ. And lastly, I believe in all unbelief."

Listen in the next place to the other creed, human in its composition, but divine in its substantial truths, as recorded in a simple document of great antiquity:—

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

Which indicates the truth of God? Weigh the one, all contradictions and absurdities—

weigh the other, all sublimity and truth—and you will address the believer in the latter, expressing your feelings in the language of one of old, “Where thou lodgest I will lodge, where thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLE.

THE history of the Bible is the history of a perpetual miracle. It is legible in the light it has diffused; we can trace its effects and measure its progress by the blessings it has deposited. A river springs up in a remote and uncultivated desert; its fountain a hill; its source the skies; it rolls onward, and makes its channel a belt of verdure, and every acre it touches it transforms into an Eden, and every cottage in its course it fills with contentment, and every palace with wealth.

Such is the progress of the Bible. Those hospitals for the sick are depositions from its waters; those merciful laws are the creations of its power; that lofty civilization is the golden sand that, more glorious than Pactolus, it has taken from the Rock of ages, and strewn as it swept along. It has entered into all conflicts, and come forth refreshed and radiant with terrible beauty. It has spoken to fierce disputants, and breathed

into them a new spirit, and imparted a new colouring to their debates. It has found access to the cottage of the peasant and to the palace of the king. Its holy words brighten our joys and assuage our sorrows. It is the light to our feet and the lamp to our path; the guide of the erring, the hope of the good, the joy of the just.

Its first and primary description is a revelation of and from God. Truths veiled are by it disclosed, and truths too remote to be seen by human eye are brought within the horizon of our view. It is the only likeness of God on earth, and yet may not be worshipped. It shows us God just while he justifies the guilty that believe in Jesus—mercy pardoning; holiness acquitting; sin punished, and the sinner saved. We feel conscious of sin, and fearful of merited judgment and death. No hand seems able to help; no door of deliverance appears to open. In this paralysis of hope we hear sounding from the throne of God, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.”

The Bible is *inspired*. This is a precious

attribute. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This gives us confidence in its disclosures, and hope in its prospects; we read it as the very word of God; the true and faithful exponent of His will and of our obligations. It is because it is so, that we can lean on the Omnipotence we cannot measure, and trust the Wisdom we cannot comprehend.

It is *written*. This is no ordinary ground of gratitude. Had the inspired truths of Christianity been left to the transmission of oral tradition, they had perished from our earth long before they had reached us. The perverting tendency of tradition is not only traceable in history, but revealed in Scripture—John xxi. 21—"Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad," this is the oral tradition, "among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die, but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Thus the written Scripture corrects the unwritten tradition. No such

calamity can befall the inspired truth of God. They are in the shape of an indestructible stereotype, an immutable fixture—proof alike against the attacks of open foes, and the corruptions of pretended friends.

The comments may vary, like the clouds of the sky—the truths remain, like the stars, fixed for ever.

The Bible is *translated*. Written originally in Hebrew and Greek, it is now translated into almost every language under heaven. It was translated into English by Tyn-dal in 1530, by Coverdale in 1535, by Cran-mer in 1539; at Geneva in 1560; by the bishops in 1568; and by the accomplished translators of our common and authorized version in 1611. It is a translation of matchless faithfulness and beauty, with few imperfections, and these of no vital importance.

The Bible is also *inspired truth* in the *varied forms of* human speech. It is the varied strain on one key-note; it is God speaking, not in the language of a sect, but of all humanity. It is variety to prevent monotony, and unity to prevent discord. Like the overshadowing cherubim, the Old and New Testament look at the same propitiatory; and,

like the lips of an oracle, give utterance to the same blessed truths.

The Bible is a plain and *intelligible book*. True it is not without mysteries, incomprehensible, because revelations of the Infinite, and thus transcending the reach of finite minds. Great truths, like very high mountains, cast around them on earth very broad shadows. But the saving truths of Christianity, that is, those which are essential to the salvation of sinners—the nature and effects of sin—the atonement—justification—sanctification—privilege and duty are fully and plainly revealed.

The people are invited and commanded to read it. For them specially was it written; and for them it is preserved. “These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deut. vi. 6.) “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me.” (John v. 39.)

The prime minister of Candace read the Scriptures on his journey, and an evangelist

was sent to help him in understanding them. The Bereans searched the Scriptures, whether these things were so, and "therefore many of them believed." Timothy had "known the Scriptures from a child."

"It is written," is the perfect standard; "To the law and to the testimony," the final appeal. Jesus so honoured his own written word, that he preferred to quote from its pages solutions of intricate questions to emitting replies from the depths of his own infinite mind. History may tell us of the fall of kingdoms, and the erection of dynasties, but it is silent on the introduction of sin, and the provision of a Saviour. Geography describes isles, and continents, and rivers, and seas; but it has no map of Eden, and no chart of the way thither. Astronomy speaks of suns, and stars, and systems; but it is silent on the Sun of Righteousness. Geology reveals strange petrifications, and fossils, and rocks, and precious stones; but it excavates not the pearl of great price. Botany describes the hyssop out of the wall, and the cedar that crowns Mount Lebanon; but not the Tree of Life.

These are all beautiful and useful in their place, but they must neither supersede nor

be a substitute for the word of God. Before its majesty science must bow, councils fall, and fathers veil their heads. One text from one Apostle outweighs all the opinions and traditions of Christendom.

Every part of this blessed book is inlaid with Christ.

The *historical* part is the record of the scaffolding that preceded his advent, and of the fabric that was carried on after his resurrection.

The *prophetic* part gives testimony to Jesus—Moses to His advent—David to his royalty—Isaiah to His priesthood—Micah to His birth-place—and the Apocalypse to His future glory, when His head shall wear many crowns. “To Him gave all the prophets witness.”

The *promissory* part of Scripture is full of Christ. The whole spiritual firmament glows with promises, as with stars of varied magnitude, but of enduring fixity. All their force, and beauty, and sweetness, are from Him. “In Him all the promises are yea and amen.”

The *ceremonial* part derives all its meaning and consistency from Him. He is the high priest, and the refuge, and the temple

the living water and the true bread, and the rock of ages. He is the body, and these are the figures. He is the truth, and these the types. He is the substance, and these the shadows.

The *doctrinal* part of Scripture is full of Christ. His righteousness, His sacrifice, His intercession, are among the leading and distinguishing truths of Christianity. Of all the doctrines of the Gospel, it may be said, "He is all and in all." He is the Lord our righteousness, the Lord our peace, the Lord our healer—the alpha and omega, the first and the last.

The *practical* part is also replete with Christ. He has "left us an example." His commandments are not grievous. His yoke is easy. His love is the inspiring motive, and His law the regulating directory. Thus the whole of Scripture is eloquent with the testimony of Jesus.

Let us then read the Bible as the very word of God ; let us approach it with solemn and reverential feelings ; let us read as if we looked upon the glory between the cherubim, or walked upon the floor of the Holy of Holies. We need the Holy Spirit to help us to understand it—not to alter, add to, or im-

prove the Bible, but to purify and enlighten the minds of those that read it. We need an "unction" from on high—a spiritual mind—a pure heart. For all this God will be inquired of.

We must not read in order to establish a theory, but in order to discover truth. We may not read one series of texts to the exclusion of another. We must come as willing learners—obedient disciples—anxious only to hear God speak, and to obey what he enjoins. We must read doctrinal and practical parts with equal and unswerving impartiality. For this we need, and for this we must seek the Holy Spirit of God. How precious, then, is the Bible! It is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path. It discloses the everlasting Husband—the eternal Father—the destiny of the soul—the hopes of glory. What ancient philosophers could not reach, children, through it, can now learn. Humanity is like a ship that has broken its cable, and is drifting in unknown seas; and the Bible is its only chart that can guide it to a haven.

Great gift of God to mankind!—it rekindles in the heart extinguished love, and relights the lamp of life, and restores the sab-

bath of the soul. To the grandeur of the man it adds the glory of the saint. It overarches the dreary caverns of despair with the bow of promise; it sets duties in the bosom of benedictions, and precepts in promises; it offers pardon for the greatest sin, and gives dignity to the humblest duty. Well did Sir William Jones write—"I have regularly and attentively read the Bible, and am of opinion that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more impartial history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all other books ever composed in any age."

"The fairest productions of human wit," writes Bishop Horne, "after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of Paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be doubly heightened, fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellences will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best."

Even Rousseau made the remarkable observation:—"I will confess to you further, that the majesty of the Scripture strikes me with admiration as the purity of the gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction—how mean, how contemptible are they, when compared with Scripture! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred person, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? What purity, what sweetness in his manner! What an affecting grace in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind! What truth in his replies! Where is the man—where the philosopher—who could so live and die, without weakness, and without ostentation? Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction. On the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the

gospels; the marks of whose truths are so striking and invincible, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.”*

In every respect the Bible is a wonderful book. The impress of divinity is on all its pages; every event is seen by its light linked to God; its every doctrine tends to glorify Him; and every precept to bless His creatures. There is no trace of flattery of the reader, nor vanity in the writers; no anxiety to do justice to any fact by colouring it, or to explain any circumstance that seems inconsistent. They wrote as those that felt they were the amanuenses of God—the sworn witnesses to facts. They concealed nothing from fear—palliated nothing through shame. Human nature, by the lips of the creature, proclaimed the sufferer on the cross to be the Son of God. Infidels, from Julian and Porphyry to Paine and Rousseau, have let out admissions that might be advantageously collected, that the Bible is the book of God.

* Rousseau's Works, vol. v. p. 215.

CHAPTER VIII.

IS THE BIBLE CONTRADICTORY OR INCONSISTENT?

BEFORE entering on alleged doctrinal and historical objections, I would reply to a statement often adduced, not so much by the Infidel as by the Romanist, viz.—That we are not possessed of the whole Bible; that there are certain books, especially some connected with the Old Testament, which ought to be enrolled in the sacred canon, and which are now wanting. These books are commonly called the Apocrypha. What the Roman Catholic alleges is, that we Protestants are really destitute of a complete Bible; a hint on which the Infidel has frequently laid hold, in order to show that Christians, even among themselves, are not agreed as to what is Scripture and what is not.

There are reasons, the most decisive and satisfactory, for believing that what is called the Apocrypha never was intended to be a part of the sacred volume—was not inspired of God—and is justly rejected from the sacred canon. This is an important subject, for some of the objections which have been

adduced against the claims of the Scriptures to be the book of God have been deduced from books which we Protestants universally disclaim, as any portion of the revealed will of God.

The Apocrypha, so called from a word which means *Hid—The hidden books*—books not read and perused publicly in the congregations of Israel—was never written in the *Hebrew tongue*, in which all the rest of the Old Testament was written. It was *never received or admitted by the Jews*, to whom were divinely entrusted the Oracles of God; it is *not once quoted* by our Lord, nor by any of the apostles, as a portion of the sacred volume. Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, who ought to know what books were recognized by his countrymen and co-religionists, disclaims the Apocrypha as part of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Apocrypha was not recognised by any of the ancient Christian fathers, who are looked up to as being valuable historians, however imperfect expositors of Divine truth. I have in my possession the catalogues of the Sacred Scriptures, or canon, as recorded by the ancient fathers of the Christian church. Athanasius, who lived in the year 340,

rejects the whole of the Apocrypha, except one book, which he thinks may be inspired, called the Book of Baruch. Hilary, who lived in the year 354, rejects all the Apocrypha. Epiphanius, who lived in the year 368, rejects it all. The fathers in the council of Laodicea, A. D. 367, reject all the Apocrypha. Gregory of Nazianzum, who lived in 370, rejects all. Amphilocheus, who lived in 370, also rejects all. Jerome, who lived in 392, rejects it all. And lastly, Gregory the Great, who is asserted by Romanists to have been the first Pope, and who lived in 590, rejects the two books of Maccabees, which are at this day received by the Roman Catholic church, and in this presents a useful specimen of Papal harmony. But we have decisive evidence that the Maccabees at least is not part of the word of God, from the simple fact, that the writer disclaims all pretension to inspiration whatever. At the end of the second book of Maccabees, which is received by the Church of Rome as part of the Sacred Scriptures, it is stated—"So these things being by Nicanor, &c., I also will here make an end of my narrative, which if I have done well, it is what I desired; but if not so perfectly, it must be pardoned me."

Can we conceive of an inspired penman begging pardon for the mistakes of his narrative? We find no parallel apology in the rest of sacred writ; and this very closing statement of the writer of the books of Maccabees, would be sufficient to disprove all claim or pretence to inspiration on his part. *In the last place*, the Apocrypha contains doctrines totally destructive of morality. For instance, in the second book of Maccabees (xiv. 42,) we read thus—"Now as the multitude sought to rush into his house, and to break open the door, and to set fire to it, when he was ready to be taken he struck himself with his sword, choosing *to die nobly* rather than to fall into the hands of the wicked, and to suffer abuses unbecoming his noble birth." In these words there is a distinct eulogium upon suicide; it is declared, that the man who rushed unbidden and unsent into the presence of his God, "died nobly." To such morality as this, we find no parallel or counterpart in the rest of the sacred volume. And in the same second book of Maccabees, we read that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." In other portions of the Apocrypha, especially in the book of Tobit, which has

been received as inspired, it is written “that to depart from injustice is to offer a *propitiatory sacrifice* for injustice, and is the obtaining of pardon for sins.” These and other doctrines that might be quoted from the Apocrypha contradict the plain doctrines of Scripture, and show distinctly that these books are not to be confounded or identified with the sacred volume; and that, whatever objections may lie against the morality of the Apocrypha, these do not militate one jot or tittle against the morality of what is really the word of God.

Some may be disposed to ask—“Does not the Church of England receive the Apocrypha?” That church does not receive it as sacred Scripture. She expressly states, that parts of the Apocrypha may be read only as containing *moral lessons*, but that no doctrine is to be proved thereby: in other words, that the Apocrypha is not inspired, though portions of it, of which some are good, may be read, just as one of her homilies may be read, to the congregation. This is decisive as to the opinion of that church on the non-inspiration of the Apocryphal books. Perhaps, however, it is to be regretted that the Apocrypha should be bound up with Holy

Scripture at all. I have been also told by ministers of the Church of England, that when a lesson in the Apocrypha does occur, they are at perfect liberty to read instead of it a portion of inspired and sacred writ.

Having thus cleared the way so far as to be able to see what is the sacred volume, the next statement to which I proceed is, that we are charged—and charged by two opposite extremes, first by the Socinian, and next by the Roman Catholic—with having a false and inaccurate translation of Holy Writ.

These two systems are both opposed to the truth. Socinianism is a system bereft of very much that is divine; Romanism is a system corrupted by very much that is human: both are equally opposed to “the truth as it is in Jesus.” But if we compare the translation of the Scriptures made in the year 1611, that is, our authorized version, with the version of the Socinians, or rather, the mutilated document put forth by them as a version, and on the other hand with the Roman Catholic version, we shall find, that though our translation might be improved, were it revised, yet when all the improvements have been introduced, they will only tell more triumphantly in favour of the Deity of Christ,

the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the way of a sinner's acceptance freely through the blood and atonement of the Lord Jesus. To give a specimen of this. In the book of Jeremiah (xvii. 9) we find these words, according to our authorized version—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Both the Socinian and the Romanist oppose this translation, and say it is far too strong; and I was quietly told, in a recent controversy for "the faith once delivered to the saints," that we Protestants had wilfully and wickedly mistranslated this verse, in order to make out the gloomy dogma of Calvinism, called the total corruption of human nature. The Roman Catholic version of the Scriptures has this translation—"The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable; who can know it?" the expression "unsearchable," being meant to apply to its *intellectual*, and not to its *moral* condition; and the individual, who called my attention to it, said that our translation was wilfully corrupted into "desperately wicked," for the mere purpose just mentioned. Now, in order to ascertain which version is correct, I applied to the Lexicon of Gesenius—the most distin-

guished Hebrew lexicographer of this or any other age, one also who is a Rationalist or Neologian, and therefore not at all biassed in favour of Calvinism. This eminent lexicographer translates the Hebrew word—"so malignant as to be incurable." If his translation be right, (and he speaks purely as a linguist and a critic, and not as a theologian,) our version is hardly strong enough. It ought to be—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and so malignant as to be utterly incurable by human art." But if we refer to the Church of Rome herself, we find her agreeing in our translation of this very word, where she does not think any dogma of hers is concerned. In this same book of Jeremiah, (xv. 18,) there being no theological motive to the contrary, she has translated the word as she ought—"Why is my sorrow become perpetual, and my wound *desperate so as to refuse to be healed?*" There she translates the word substantially the same as we do; but when she has to deal with a doctrinal point, she perverts the word, and in order to get rid of the doctrine that man's heart is desperately wicked, she softens and explains the phrase, so as to make it mean nothing at all. I might go over the whole

version, and show that when we compare our translation with the Roman Catholic or the Socinian, we shall find our own, in almost every instance, triumphantly correct. Let us take another instance from the Gospel of John, in the Douay version, (ii. 4,) where our Lord, when about¹ to transform the water into wine, says to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" The Church of Rome felt this a sort of repulse to the homage that she yields to the Virgin Mary, and therefore translated it, "What is it to me and to thee?"—which makes nonsense, and cannot be interpreted to mean either worship or repulse, or any thing at all. But in the Gospel of Mark (v. 7) the Church of Rome translates the very same Greek words, τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, "What have I to do with thee?" Where no dogma of our faith is concerned, she translates them exactly as we do; where a dogma *is* concerned, she mistranslates and perverts the meaning of God's word.

I admit, that our version is susceptible of improvement; but of such a nature, that if all the words in our translation which might be changed, were translated exactly as the original warrants, those great truths which are embodied in the standards of the Pro-

testant churches, and which are proclaimed from every evangelical pulpit, would shine forth in yet more glorious and beautiful relief. Let me give another instance or two. In Paul's Epistle to Titus (ii. 13) we find these words: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." From reading these words we might suppose the meaning to be: "Looking for the glorious appearing of the great God," (that is, God the Father,) "and," secondly, "of our Saviour Jesus Christ;" but the literal translation of the verse, as any classical scholar well knows, is this: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of JESUS CHRIST, OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOUR." Again; in the Second Epistle of Peter (i. 1) we find these words: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." From reading these words, one would likewise suppose allusion to be made to God the Father and to God the Son; but the literal translation is, "through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour." Along with these two, there are

other four passages to which I might refer, did space permit—(namely, Eph. v. 5; 2 Thess. i. 12; 1 Tim. v. 21; and Jude 4)—in all of which we find the very same phraseology mistranslated in our version, as if two persons of the Trinity were meant; but when corrected according to exact and accurate criticism, we have in these six passages most decided and intelligible proof of the essential Deity and Godhead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I may show, by reference to two or three specimens of a different class, what would be the result of such alterations of our authorized translation as would render it more minutely literal. In the Gospel of John (i. 14) it is said, that our Lord “was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” The literal translation is, “dwelt as in a tent among us;” walked and lived among us as in a movable tabernacle, into which He had come for a season. Again; in the Gospel of Matthew (ix. 36) we read that our Lord “was moved with compassion.” The literal translation of that is: “All his bowels were agitated and trembled with sympathy and compassion.” The ancients believed the bowels to be the seat of sympathy, or mercy. The Greek word

used there to denote compassion is the most expressive that human language is capable of employing, insomuch that our version utterly fails to convey the vastness and fullness of the meaning of the original. Again; in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 1) our translation is, "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The Greek word here is taken from the practices that accompanied the offering of animals in sacrifices. It is said, that in ancient nations, when the animal that was to be sacrificed had been killed, the priest examined minutely all its entrails and bowels, and watched certain spots or symptoms, from which he augured success or misfortune in the enterprise in which the offerer was embarked; and therefore the apostle says, that all things are as clearly noted by God, as the entrails of the victim were laid bare and examined by the priest. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (iv. 13) the apostle says, "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things, unto this day." The word in the original here is amazingly expressive. When a victim was slain for sacrifice, all the parts that were not fit to be offered on the altar

were swept away from the floor of the temple, and cast out as pollution, and unfit to remain in the temple. Now says the apostle, "We are exactly like these parts of the sacrifice, which are cut off and cast away, and treated as unfit to be either dedicated to God, or employed in the service of man ;" a most expressive phrase, to denote the utter contempt in which the world held the apostles. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, again (v. 27) we read—"That He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish." The Greek word there is derived from the name of one of the heathen gods, Momus, who was supposed to be the god of laughter ; and the apostle's assertion is, that we are to be presented so spotless, that one disposed to ridicule would be unable to detect cause of derision or scorn in us.

Now what is the result of these alterations? Not that the doctrines we preach are impugned, not that the theology we hear from every evangelical pulpit is affected ; but that the great truths of Christianity are brought forth in more brilliant and prominent glare.

Let us now turn ~~our~~ attention to some of the objections that have been urged against certain statements, doctrines, and declarations in the word of God.

The first which I shall mention, is the curse pronounced upon the serpent. Many infidels have said—“*Does it not seem a sort of paltry revenge on the part of God, to have cursed the serpent when he pronounced a curse upon guilty and offending man? Why punish the irresponsible? Now our reply to this is: Do we not find the very same fact occur in creation and in providence? The ocean engulfs the mother and the helpless babe without distinction. The earthquake overturns churches as well as theatres; and saints and sinners perish in the catastrophe. The objection of the infidel is, that it was unjust in God to make the dumb creature suffer in consequence of the guilt of man; but if this be an argument against the God of revelation, will it not tell with equal strength against the God of creation? Suppose an incendiary sets fire to a stable, and ten or twenty horses are destroyed, is not the very same apparent injustice suffered to take place in the providence of God? Suppose a war begins between two nations, and*

the noble horse is destroyed in battle ; do we not see the brutes there suffering in consequence of man's passion and revenge ? Why has not a benevolent Being so arranged what Infinite Wisdom could have arranged, that man's evil passions should not go beyond the bosom of the sinner, and that innocence should be impervious to injury from guilt ? It is thus that creation, providence, and revelation all coincide, and indicate a common parentage. If, then, it be an argument against the Bible being a revelation from God, that it states the brutes to have been sentenced to suffer in consequence of man's apostasy, it must be an argument against the creation being the work of God, that we find animals there suffering in consequence of the guilt of man.

The next objection we refer to is: That *certain passions are in Scripture ascribed to God* ; as, for instance, jealousy, hatred, anger, repentance, and such like. Now, our reply to this is, that all the truths in the word of God are conveyed, more or less, in figurative language. Heaven is set forth by a glorious land, and a beauteous temple ; its access, by gates of pearl ; its bliss, by fruits that grow, and streams that roll, harps of

sweet sound, with minstrels that play upon them. All this every one understands to be figurative language, needful to convey to man some idea of the exalted glory and felicity of that better land. In the same way, God represents himself to man under the figures or symbols of human passions; not that man may believe God to be like himself, a creature liable to anger and to change, but that man may have a clearer conception of God's feelings towards sin and holiness, towards injustice and crime. Hence, when it is said God is angry with the sinner, it simply denotes that He disapproves, by His very nature, of sin. When it is said that God is jealous, it simply denotes that He will bear with no rival in His worship, no claimant of His glory. When it is said that he repents, it simply denotes that He alters the course He formerly pursued, not in respect to His purposes, but to our perceptions. We must not blame God's words, but our own weakness. Revelation is the infinite within the limitations of our humanity. If God had left these expressions on record without any explanation, there might be some pretence for this objection; but in order to guard against any misconception,

we read: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts;" and again, He has represented Himself "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." "God is not man, that He should repent." The objection, therefore, that God is represented as literally possessed of human passions is at once disposed of.

Another objection is drawn from the text, wherein it is said *that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh*. Infidels say: "Is it reasonable or just, that God should condemn that man to everlasting destruction, whose heart He himself hardened?" Now, we may observe here, in the first place, that it has been noticed more than two hundred years ago, that the literal rendering of the phrase in several instances may justly be: the Lord permitted, or suffered, Pharaoh's heart to be hardened; the same mood of the Hebrew verb which means to cause, signifying also to permit. And if it be an objection against revelation being the inspiration of God that He *permitted* Pharaoh's heart to

be hardened, there is the same objection against creation being the work of God. Does He not suffer men to be born blind? Does He not suffer men to come into the world deformed? Does He not suffer injuries and casualties to destroy hundreds? You will not say, that this proves creation not to be the work of God. In the same way, if He suffers the passions of men to work their natural evil results, and their hearts to be hardened, it does not prove that the book which records such things is not the word of God. But I would not shrink from the strongest view of this matter. I take the words as they are in our version: "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart;" and I say, there was nothing in that, inconsistent with the attributes of a wise, and just, and merciful, and gracious God. For all the offers of the Gospel, all the motives and opportunities and means that could possibly be presented are presented to the sinner; and if he rejects them all, sins against the clearest light, tramples on the kindest love, and nothing more can be done for him than has been done, then there are remaining just two ways in which that man may be punished. Either he may be cut off, and soul and body both

cast into hell; or his physical life may be spared, while his moral and spiritual life may be extinguished. In either case, the punishment is the same. Pharaoh, instead of having his heart hardened, might justly have been cut off at that moment, and cast out from the presence of God; but instead of this, God suffered his physical existence to be protracted, and put an end to his moral and spiritual existence, and therefore while on earth he was in effect in that place where mercy never comes. You would not have objected, if God had cut off his natural life, and given him no more means of repentance, for this is done every day. Then you ought not to object to God's cutting off His moral and spiritual life, after every thing had been done for him that could be done.

The next doctrine objected to, is that contained in the words, God "*visits the sins of the fathers upon the children.*" Do we not find this illustrated in ordinary life? A nobleman rebels against his prince; he loses his coronet, and his family suffer for centuries afterwards. A king commits some great crime; and the whole country is thrown into rebellion and war. A father, through gambling, loses all his property; and his chil-

dren, and his children's children suffer. A parent becomes a drunkard and a debauchee, wastes his health and injures his constitution; and his offspring are diseased, to the third and fourth generation. Now, what is all this, but the sins of the fathers visited upon the children in the arrangements of a Providence we can see, and in the occurrences of daily life? If therefore the *record* of this fact in the Bible, proves the book not to be the inspiration of God, then would the *happening* of this fact every day before our eyes prove creation and Providence not to be the workmanship of God. Moreover, when God states that He visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, He does *not* refer to their *after* existence. In Ezekiel (xviii. 19) we read: "Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." This chapter

refers to the after existence of the soul. The Jews construed the statement in Exodus falsely, and understood it to refer to God's arrangements in eternity, as well as to His dealings in time: but here by the mouth of His prophet He distinctly contradicts this. He shows, that "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children" has reference purely to man's temporal condition, and has no direct bearing whatever on the destinies of his immortal soul.

A passage objected to by infidels as inconsistent with the idea of the moral character of God, is in Joshua (xii. 7,) where we read that God commanded *all the Canaanitish nations* to be extirpated. They say, that it seems wholly inconsistent with what we should suppose to be the merciful character of God, that He should thus command whole nations to be destroyed by the sword. But when we hear that pestilence has depopulated crowded cities, or that Napoleon has swept the continent of Europe, and left but the wrecks of smoking homes and the bones of slaughtered citizens to be the mementos of his march, we do not say that this is a proof that there is no God in heaven, nor any moral government of the inhabitants of

the earth; and yet, if the destruction of the nations of the Canaanites *immediately* by God is a proof that the Bible which records it is not the inspiration of God, then the destruction of nations by the sword of the conqueror, or by the breath of pestilence, must be a proof that there is no God, or that creation is not the work of God, nor providence a part of the general government of God. When we see juries in our own country bringing in a verdict of Guilty, the judge pronouncing sentence of death, and that sentence executed, we do not complain that there is any thing wrong or unjust in the act. Now these Canaanites are declared and proved to have polluted and stained the land with abominable crimes: they had time and were urged to repent of them, and thus escape destruction; and when they were cut off by the sword of Heaven, it was merely the holy judge pronouncing sentence on flagrant criminals, and the righteous governor executing that sentence to the letter. We are not to regard the extirpation of the Canaanites as an act of arbitrary or private revenge, but as the execution of the sentence of retributive justice, and such as had per-

haps as great mercy to the innocent, as equity to the guilty.

It is urged, that the *command given to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, is altogether inconsistent with all right conceptions of the justice and the mercy of God.* First, the apparently intended act was symbolical; it was meant to represent the sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God, as a propitiation for the sins of the world. In the second place, God has a sovereign and indisputable claim to the life of His creature, when, where, and how He pleases; so much so, that if Abraham had actually plunged the knife into the bosom of Isaac at the command of God, it would have been right in Abraham, and just in God. He has a right to summon the soul to his presence through any avenue, in any circumstances, and by any instrumentality that to Him may seem meet. In the last place, Abraham did *not* kill Isaac, and this alone extinguishes all objections.

In the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy and in some parts of Ezekiel, *there are passages*, it is alleged, *so indeiicate*, as to be unfit for general perusal; and infidels have urged this as a reason for disbelieving the Bible to be the inspiration of God, and

Romanists, as an argument against its general perusal. In the first place, we have no fact recorded in Scripture which does not actually occur in creation and in providence; and if therefore the *record* of that which to us seems indelicate is an argument that God did not write the book, then the actual *occurrence* in creation and in providence of these same indelicacies must be an argument that God did not create the world, and that he does not rule it by his providence. In courts of justice, and in professional and medical communications, circumstances transpire which may seem indelicate to us, but of which we never complain, because we know that such communications are essential to the good and well-being of mankind; and may not these communications of the great Physician and the moral Restorer of the world, notwithstanding their apparent indelicacy, be essential for the moral restoration of the world? The Scripture is an exact portrait of man; if it shows the bright in his character, it also records the black; if it proclaims that which ennobles and exalts him, it discloses that which tends to depress and humble him. This book would not be, as it professes to be, a full length portraiture, not merely of man's

restoration, but of man's ruin, and wretchedness, and guilt, if it did not record fully and fairly the sins, as well as the virtues, of human kind. There is also, in the present day, what is thought delicacy of language, which was unknown, even two or three centuries ago, and still more so in the day when the Bible was written. In ancient times, and especially in Eastern countries, men and women never mingled together in society, but kept perfectly distinct and separate ; and allusions might be made, in such circumstances, by no means indelicate. In a recent work, written, I believe, by an Arab, it is stated as a most revolting circumstance, that in England the ladies walk the streets without being veiled, and openly mingle with men in society and in the churches. For this, the foreigner charges us with a want of delicacy, just as we charge some thing else as indelicate against a past generation. But the question may well be mooted, whether there was not more real delicacy in days when these very expressions were employed, than there is in the age in which we live, with all its supposed perfection and fastidious refinement. There is here also a distinction worth recollection. When we read of

that which is immoral and indelicate in the novel or romance, it is recorded in such a way as to excite corresponding emotions in the mind of the reader ; but when we read what are called the most indelicate records in the word of God, they are recorded in tones of holy and righteous severity, and instead of being calculated to excite one unhallowed emotion, they are calculated to make us abhor, and abstain from what is foul, and love whatsoever is just, and pure, and of good report. And for all these reasons we say, that those parts of Holy Writ which appear to us indelicate may be vindicated on the strictest principles, and shown to be neither inconsistent with the moral character of God, nor calculated to contaminate the feelings and affections of mankind.

Polygamy, it is objected, *was suffered to exist among the Hebrews* and in other Eastern nations. We read of the number of wives of David, and of the concubines of Solomon ; and the infidel immediately starts the objection—Can this have been permitted by the same God who again and again forbids it ? Now, the laws which may be suited to one age of the world may not be suited to another age ; the laws which may be most

essential in one stage of the world's history may be the reverse in another stage. Our Lord gives the reason of the change. Polygamy was suffered "because of the hardness of the people's hearts." It was a practice tolerated in the circumstances of the age, admitted to be a corruption of the primeval law, not a perpetual moral maxim intended to regulate the intercourse and conduct of mankind in after times. Is it not the fact, that there are different laws, not only for different ages, but for different states of the same community? The same laws would not do for the prison which are required for upright and polished men; the same laws do not prevail in a penal colony that are in force in the free mother country; the same laws will not do for Otaheite that are proper for Britain. There exists in the usages of men a certain accommodation of the laws to the country they are intended to regulate. We have something like this illustrated in the present day, in the conduct, for instance, of medical men. Suppose a person is seized with a dangerous disease, and is placed under a physician; suppose he is a person who has been accustomed to drink a considerable quantity of alcohol every day. The physician,

though he will reprehend the use of alcohol, will allow that person a certain quantity of it every day, and will decrease it gradually, until the patient is able to abstain from it wholly. Now it may have been, that God allowed, in the circumstances of other times, the gradual diminution of a practice, which now, when "life and immortality are brought to light," is utterly interdicted. Polygamy, too, like many other things, is not sinful except by the interdict of God. Without God's law upon the subject, there is no more guilt in polygamy, than there would be in violating the seventh day while God had not commanded it to be kept holy. It is His command that makes it sinful. Polygamy is not essentially sinful, like murder or theft; but is now become sinful, because the command of God forbids it. Cain, in the infancy of the world, married his sister, and it was not then sinful; but *now* it would be most sinful. So that there must be some adaptation between the age and condition of the individuals, and the laws employed to govern and restrain them.

It has been contended, contradictory as it may appear to the former objection, *that the morality of the New Testament is too strict*

and severe. The young man, for instance, says—"It cannot be sin for me to gratify the passions and propensities of my nature. I am constituted so, and *God* has made me so, and surely it cannot be sin in me to do what God has made me disposed to." Now we shall find, that the *brother*, who will plead for the gratification of certain passions in himself, will reprobate the indulgence of those passions in a sister or some one near and dear to him. This very circumstance shows that there is in such a one's heart, if his lusts and passions would allow it to be felt, a conviction that he is acting contrary to the will of God, and inconsistently with the welfare of society. The lofty holiness required in the gospel, is merely the highest happiness required in man. The highest morality is the highest joy. God did not constitute man necessarily a sinner. The whole guilt and responsibility are ours if we sin, while all the glory must be God's if we are reclaimed from the practice of vice to the practice of virtue and piety.

It is said *that the murder of Jephthah's daughter by Jephthah seems inconsistent with the views we form of the mercy and justice of God.* If we peruse the chapter

in which this is recorded (Judges xi), we shall come to the conclusion that Jephthah did not destroy his daughter, and that the common and popular impression is wholly unwarranted by the sacred narrative. It is stated, first of all, that Jephthah promised, that the first thing that met him, if he returned victorious and in peace, "should surely be the Lord's, and he would offer it up for a burnt offering." Now, if we refer to the marginal reading (which is generally the most correct), we shall find it run—"It shall surely be the Lord's, or I will offer up a burnt-offering;" in the original there is no word for "*it*" ("I will offer *it* up"), but the literal reading is—"Whatsoever cometh forth of the door of my house to meet me, shall surely be the Lord's, or" (if I do not devote that object to Him) "I will offer up a burnt-offering." In the next place, Jephthah the father was not at liberty to kill his daughter by any law; much less on any vow made in haste. Human sacrifices were interdicted under all circumstances. And further; in order to offer up a sacrifice, there must have been a priest to do it. Jephthah was not a priest; he was a soldier, and no priest of the tribe of Aaron dare offer up a human victim

in sacrifice to God. In the next place, it is stated in the thirty-eighth verse, that "she went with her companions for two months, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains." She was secluded and separated from the world, and devoted to a sort of monastic life. If she had been slain by her father and offered up as a sacrifice or burnt-offering, how could this have been recorded? And in the last verses it is said, that "her father *did with her according to his vow*" (not "he slaughtered her"), "and she *knew no man* ; and it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went *yearly* to lament the daughter of Jephthah four days in a year." The literal rendering of that last expression is, that "the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament *with* the daughter of Jephthah." Any one who will refer to the original, will see that the preposition "with" is there. If we take all these circumstances into consideration, it will appear that the objection, that Jephthah, with the command or permission of God, sacrificed his own daughter as a burnt-offering, falls to the ground, because no such thing occurred, and all that did happen was, that she was devoted

to the immediate service and worship of God in a state of perpetual virginity.

Another passage objected to as inconsistent with the character of God, is found in the second book of Samuel (xii. 31) where it is said of David, when he had taken the city of Rabbah—"And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem." This is recorded in another passage of sacred writ in still ampler and stronger terms; and Paine, especially, has boasted and said—"Is this the inspiration of God? was David acting according to the suggestions of Him, who is supposed to be wise and merciful, when he thus tortured and destroyed hundreds of human beings?" Now some will be surprised when I inform them, that the Hebrew word *beth*, which is here translated "under," does not mean *under*, (that is, placed beneath,) but means *to* (in the sense in which we say, in ordinary language, "I put him to the plough"); the literal meaning is, that he put them *to* saws and *to* harrows and *to* axes

and *to* the making of bricks—that is, he made them perpetual working slaves. There is no warrant whatever for the construction that he destroyed them by saws and harrows and axes, or inhumanly forced them into the furnace of the brick-kiln. He simply set them to a laborious drudgery.

Another passage adduced as a disproof of Christianity being from God, is the statement that some “little children” mocked Elisha, and said to him, “Go up, thou bald-head,” and *that for this, forty-two of them were instantly, by the command of God, torn to pieces by bears that came forth from the wood.* Now the Hebrew word, here translated “little children,” is in various parts of the word of God translated “young men.” Isaac, at the age of twenty, is called by this very Hebrew noun. Joseph, at the age of thirty, is called by the same word—a young man. The real rendering of the passage therefore is, that forty-two young men (who may have been twenty or thirty years of age) came forth from the city of Bethel, which had been devoted to the worship of an idol, and blasphemed the living God, and mocked his prophet; and in just judgment for their conduct, the bears, the executioners

simply, came forth, at the bidding of the Most High, from the forest, and destroyed them.

The next objection which I notice, against the Scriptures being the inspiration of God, *rests on what are called its curses*; those, for instance, recorded in the fifty-fifth Psalm, and in the book of Deuteronomy—"Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep; cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out." Now, in reply to this, I observe, that the *future* tense and the *imperative* mood of the Hebrew verb are in certain persons precisely the same, and that it was entirely in the option of our translators to render every one of these passages "Thou wilt" or "Thou shalt," as "Shalt thou be" or "Be thou." And since this liberty was left us, it might seem more consistent with the character of God, that these passages should be rendered, "Thou wilt be cursed;" and in the fifty-fifth Psalm, "Death will seize upon them, and they will go down quick into

hell." Generally, wherever the expression is put in the imperative mood, it might be rendered in the future tense; and thereby made a prediction of what will surely betide the sinner, and not an imprecation of what is deserved. But suppose that these passages are rightly rendered in the imperative mood, and not in the future tense, I do not hesitate to defend them; still they do not militate against the character of God. God has a right to send forth His servants *as judges*, to pronounce His sentence upon those that rebel against Him and disobey His laws. And bear in mind, that when Moses or David used these imprecations (if we call them so,) they did so, not as private individuals, gratifying personal feelings, but as judges acting by the authority and clothed with the commission of their Lord and Master in heaven.

The next objection adduced against Scripture, to which I shall refer, *is everlasting punishment*. The infidel says, it seems wholly inconsistent with the mercy and goodness of God, that His creatures should be doomed to everlasting suffering, and that a punishment should be inflicted so disproportionate to the sins of which they have been guilty. I do not agree with those who have

tried to explain away this awful truth ; they seem to me to torture Scripture. But if I can show, that there are punishments even in this world which seem in their measure disproportionate to the offence, it will not do to plead against the revelation of God because there is a punishment declared in it which seems to us disproportionate to the offence. Now suppose a man commits one single sin ; how often is it found, that he incurs a lifetime of shame, and suffering, and sorrow ! Does it not seem a punishment totally disproportionate to the offence of which he has been guilty, that through a whole life he should suffer shame and sorrow for one single violation of the laws of his country, or the re-scripts of his God ? And again, in the world in which we live, we can show even now, the infliction of a perpetual punishment. We find that some are suffering punishment every week, every day, every hour, every moment ; and though it be in different individuals, yet that a large portion of the race as a whole is undergoing perpetual punitive treatment. And therefore it may not be inconsistent with the character of God, that the individual who has broken His laws and rebelled against His offers of mercy, should be consigned to

a place where mercy is no longer offered. But do we object to everlasting happiness? The infidel speaks of desert; he thinks moral conduct is entitled to reward, and immoral conduct deserves punishment, and he admits that everlasting happiness may justly be conferred on what is pleasing to God, and commendable. Then why should he object to everlasting punishment being decreed for immoral conduct, that is displeasing to God, and blameworthy? But I add, the punishment of the lost is of that kind, that it must be perpetual by the very necessity of the thing. What is hell? It is not a place of literal flames and literal fire. I need not tell you that the language employed is symbolical and figurative. Hell is moral aberration from God, just as heaven is moral approximation to God. At every step the lost recede from God, their horror and remorse and misery must be augmented, and the possibility of return diminished, just as at every step the saint approximates to God, his joy and peace and happiness must be increased. And therefore the sentence pronounced upon the ungodly is merely—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still;" and the sentence pro-

nounced upon the righteous is just—"He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Hell is just the impress of a *centrifugal* power on man's soul, that carries him further and further from God and from happiness; and Heaven is a *centripetal* power imparted to man's soul, that draws him nearer and nearer to God and to joy. The one begins with "Depart," and the other with "Come." And therefore, from the very nature of the thing, and from parity of reasoning upon eternal blessedness, eternal punishment does not seem at all inconsistent with the character of God, or contrary to what we should believe to be His dealings hereafter.

Such are some of the objections urged against the word of God. When fairly examined, they do not tell in favour of infidelity; but the contrary. May the Spirit of God bring home his truth to our hearts and consciences; and convince us, that though there are in the word of God "some things hard to be understood," it is only "they that are unlearned and unstable" who "wrest them to their own destruction."

CHAPTER IX.

IS THE BIBLE CONTRADICTORY AND INCONSISTENT?

ONE of the first objections which have been adduced against the statements of the word of God, is, that the whole story of Paradise lost, with its happy pair, its tree of life and its tree of knowledge, is a tale altogether unworthy of God. Now if there were another account of the origin of evil of a more philosophic character, if there were any other tale or story that could be substantiated, or that bore upon its face the impress of a purer and a nobler author, then indeed we might peradventure reject the sacred narrative. But when we turn to the stories recorded in the heathen poets, in Hesiod, and Virgil, and Ovid, and Lucretius—when we read of their golden age, of the golden apple and the Hesperides, of the results of Pandora's box and Prometheus' theft, and kindred tales—we see at once the anile and puerile statements of a wild and exuberant imagination, but yet at the same time they are confirmatory of the inspired record, by their being evi-

dently taken from it; and if we proceed to compare the simple and noble narrative of Genesis with the fancies and figments of the poets, we are constrained to acknowledge that the first is the truth, bearing upon its brow the imprimatur of God, and the last the fables of driveling ignorance.

But it is further objected, *that the subjecting of our first parents to a test*, by observance of which they should stand, and by disobedience to which they should fall, seems to have been an unnecessary and uncalled-for obligation imposed on them by God. It was not so. Man was by his very being a creature, and God the Creator. It was essentially necessary, therefore, that the creature should be placed under law; that there should be in the creature, and about the creature, the traces of a creature's origin, and of a creature's dependence and allegiance to his Maker. Every orb and intelligence must stand thus. Now what could be more just, simple, or easy to be observed, than the arrangement of Eden; as if God, by it, proclaimed—"In order to show that thou, Adam, art a creature, and in duty bound to recognize and obey me, thy Creator, I lay upon thy shoul-

der no harder burden than this, that thou mayest eat of every fruit-tree that waves its branches in broad and beauteous Eden, save only of one single tree, of which thou mayest not eat; for if thou dost eat, death, with all its woe, must follow as the necessary consequence?" If the temptation had been *great* to eat of this tree, one might have said that Adam was placed in trying circumstances; but when the temptation to eat was the *least* possible, and when the punishment in case of eating was the greatest possible, we can see in these the arrangement and the requirements of heavenly order, the love of God, and the inexcusable heinousness of the guilt that was involved in that crime, when Adam took of the forbidden tree, and—

"Brought death into all the world, and all our woe."

But were we to reject the Mosaic account of the introduction of evil, we do not get rid of the difficulty. We see sin and suffering naked and grim in the world. How do you reconcile the existence of these, and the existence of a benevolent God? What better solution than that of Christianity can you give? I therefore assert, that whether we compare the record of Moses with the legen-

dary fables of the heathen poets, or with the ablest and brightest conjectures of mind or suggestions of philosophy, or whether we analyze and examine all the circumstances of the case, we shall be constrained to acknowledge that the whole thing was worthy of God, and that in making this arrangement God not only acted mercifully, but justly, wisely, and well.

The Mosaic record is wholly disbelieved by some. Its credibility must rest on evidence. To confirm its antiquity and truth in its merely historical aspect, I would refer to the division of time, which prevails in almost every country in the world; a division traceable to the books of Moses. For instance; the division of the year into 365 days and a fraction is the natural result of observing the earth's motion about the sun; the division of time into months is a very natural consequence of observing the phases of the moon; and the division of time into day and night is obviously forced on us. But how can we account for the fact, that in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and in America, time is divided into periods of seven days, commonly called *weeks*? No physical observation will account for this. No inference from sun, moon, or stars, will

account for it. Obviously, therefore, the only conclusion we can arrive at is, that it was either a tradition handed down from the first fathers of the human race, and preserved among them, though scattered to the utmost bounds of the habitable globe, or that it was directly copied from the writings of Moses, and incorporated in the laws and habits of the nations. So tied, moreover, does man seem to be to this division of time into seven days, or into weeks, that when French philosophy, in its frenzy and infatuation, tried to abolish it, and instead of weeks to establish decades, the whole nation soon revolted against the change, and returned, as from some mysterious instinct, to the old division into seven days, or weeks, as they now observe it.

Another proof of the antiquity of the Mosaic record, is found in the language of almost every country in the world. Words such as Adam and Eve, all indicate the Hebrew to have been the language of Eden. Every one acquainted with the Hebrew tongue, and with the Greek and Latin and modern languages, will see that most of them can more or less plainly be traced back to the Hebrew. The very letters of the Hebrew alphabet—aleph, beth, gimel, dalet, &c., are exactly parallel with the Greek—alpha, beta,

gamma, delta, &c.; and if we refer to the English alphabet, or the Italian, French, Spanish, German, we find nearly the same forms given to the letters, and almost the same sounds, and all corresponding strikingly with the Hebrew; while in the Welsh, the Gaelic, and the Celtic, we find many words plainly of Hebrew origin. What does this prove, but that languages look backward to the first, the Hebrew; that the language of every nation owns the East as its parent? In one word, the languages of the earth are vocal with attestations to the truth of the Mosaic record. And so the structure of language, as well as the epochs of chronology, proclaims in impressive accents—"God's word is Truth."

Some philosophers have tried to prove, from certain Hindoo and Chinese calculations of eclipses, that the earth is very much older than the Mosaic record represents it to be. The Chinese have one table, in which they calculate eclipses that happened many thousand years before the earth was created, according to the Mosaic history. But the celebrated La Place has demonstrated, that these tables of the Chinese are downright forgeries, and that not a single particle of dependence is to be placed upon them.

The same celebrated astronomer has demonstrated a most important fact. The earth moves round the sun in an oval line; and a line passing from one end of that oval to the other, is called, in astronomical language, the line of the apsides. Now it has been found, that this line rises at a certain angle from what is called the line of the equinoxes, and proceeds in its own direction in a given ratio so accurate and constant, that in twenty-five thousand years it would perform a perfect revolution, and meet the equinox again. But La Place, having demonstrated that this line proceeds a certain distance in a given time, has calculated the precession of this line from the line of the equinoxes, and found it to amount to such a number of degrees, as proves that it has been proceeding about 5,800 years; exactly agreeing with the account found in the Mosaic record in the word of God.

There is another proof of the recency of the earth's formation that has been suggested. It is ascertained, that by the action of the winds, rains, and frosts, every mountain is undergoing a gradual decomposition; so that Ben Lomond and Ben Nevis are so many feet lower than they were two or three thou-

sand years ago, and if they had been in existence ten or twenty thousand years, these mountains, it is thought, would have become levelled, and the whole earth would have been now a plain spheroid. Now the very fact, that the mountains are not yet levelled, and the valleys are not yet filled up with the *débris* proceeding from them, some think a proof that the world is not eternal, and is probably but about the age the Mosaic record announces it to be.

Another infidel objection is, that *the language and ideas of the books of Moses are inconsistent with the discoveries of modern science*. For instance: Moses states that the light was created and shone upon the world prior to the fourth day, on which the sun and moon were created; and infidel philosophers ask, How can we find light without the sun? Our reply is this; it is true, we cannot now find day-light without the sun having risen to disseminate that light, but this does not prove that light may not have existed before the fourth day of creation without the sun to disseminate it. We have a parallel case in the waters. It is recorded that the earth and the water were so intimately mingled together, that they formed

one vast chaos, and God separated the earth from the water, and made the ocean to be that great reservoir which sends its waters throughout the arteries, veins, and fountains of the earth. In the same manner He collected the particles of light into the sun, and made it to be the source whence that light should be shed forth over the globe. We read, "God made two great lights," but the literal translation is, He "made two great *light-bearers*." The sun and the moon may have existed millions of years before this. What God did upon the fourth day, was to consolidate the scattered rays of light in that body called the sun, and to make him to be the great and glorious luminary to light the world that rolls around him, and on which we dwell. So that the language of Moses, we observe, is the language of the Newtonian philosopher, when he says, not that the sun and moon were created at that time, but that they were then made to sustain a relationship to the world, which they had not sustained before, that of lighting it by their rays.

Another objection to the Mosaic record, urged with apparent triumph, is, that *the human race is plainly not sprung from one*

common parent. The infidel craniologist—though all craniologists are not infidels—the infidel craniologist will show you the shape of the head of a European, of an African, of an Asiatic, of an American; he will show you the colours of their skins—the white, the jet black, and the copper coloured; and he will insist on the inference that they are not all sprung from one common parent. Now our reply to this is to be found in the pages of Buffon, who was a man not disposed to favour or help Christianity, who affirms that man, though white in Europe, yellow in Asia, and black in Africa, yet is one race, and must evidently have come from the same original. One fact will demonstrate the truth of this. At this moment on the coast of India there is found a colony of Jews, who were originally of a comparatively fair complexion, and who of course have not been permitted to intermarry with others of a different race, and yet they are now as black as the inhabitants of Guinea, or the swarthy sons of Africa; a demonstration that climate, and sun, and food, are sufficient to account for diversities of colour in the human race. The darkness of the complexion too is directly the effect of climate. In Guinea man is jet

black ; in Abyssinia, less hot, he is less dark ; in Asia he is still less so ; and in Europe he is white. It is monstrous to depreciate the African as a lower race. Some of the noblest men that have shed the triumphs of their genius upon the world in which we live were black as the blackest slaves of Africa. Hannibal, the Wellington of ancient days, the man that shook Rome with his name, was black, probably, as the blackest slave at this moment toiling in the West Indies.

Another objection urged by the infidel has been, that the Mosaic record cannot be true, because it does not account for *the peopling of America*. America was unknown, they say, till Columbus discovered it, and therefore cannot have been peopled from the same common parent with Asia, Europe, and Africa. Now this has been admirably settled by the voyages of Captain Cook. He has shown that the coast of Tartary on the Asiatic side, and the coast of America on the opposite side, indicate, like the cliffs of Dover and Calais, that they were originally one continent, that they are separated only by a very narrow sea, and that between these two continents there are two islands, from either of which we may see either vast continent. It

may be seen too, that the geological phenomena presented on the Asiatic side and on American side are precisely similar. It is on record that the natives of the Society Isles have been drifted in their boats six hundred miles from their home; and therefore the presumption is strong that the inhabitants of Asia sailed to America, and that by them aboriginal America was peopled with its teeming thousands. It has been shown, also, that the waters of the intervening sea are frequently frozen over in the winter; and therefore, without the use of boats at all, we can account for the peopling of America. The inhabitants of the new world are, in short, the children and grandchildren of the inhabitants of the old.

One fact that I would here adduce, is in no slight degree demonstrative of the truth of the Mosaic record; it is, the remnant of that supremacy which Moses states to have been originally bestowed on man, still possessed by man wherever we find him. All animals—the mole, or the owl, or the lamb—exert their strength and develope their peculiarities, simply to supply themselves with food and to perpetuate their species. But not so with man; we find him mastering the

energies of brutes, and subduing them to his will ; bringing the element of steam, and of water, and of fire, to subserve his interests, manufacture and carry his goods, and execute his designs ; and in the shepherd or in the king, in the mechanic or in the merchant, in the sailor or in the soldier, developing bright and still surviving evidences of his primeval lordship. Even in ruins he maintains a fragment of the sceptre of the lord of the world, with the investiture of which he was formed. This fact is a strong confirmation of the Mosaic record, which says that man was made to have dominion over the creatures.

Infidels object to *the longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs*. They classify this statement with the fabulous legends of Greece and of Rome ; and they say, that all present experience proves it absurd to imagine that there was a race of men who lived nine hundred or a thousand years. The ancient heathen, Greeks and Latins, record the tradition, that men before the flood, with which they connect the name of Deucalion, lived to a much more protracted age than at present ; thus indicating the remains of a truth borrowed from the Jews. There is also a rea-

son for it. Longevity was necessary to perpetuate and maintain revelation in the world; there being no written revelation, it was necessary that the living witnesses of the word spoken by God should have many years added to their biography. Hence Adam, Methuselah, and Noah, were *three links*, that outlasted two thousand years. Methuselah spake with Adam, and heard from him the story of his fall and restoration; and Noah conversed with Methuselah, and received from him the narrative which he had received from Adam. The longevity of the antediluvians was thus necessary to maintain the purity and perpetuate the progress of Divine truth in the world. There is nothing to disprove it; it rests on the credibility of the record, while it is also reasonable to expect it to have been so.

The next objection is made to the occurrence of what in the Mosaic record is called *the Flood*. Infidels say, that there is no satisfactory evidence whatever that such a catastrophe befell our world. But we find scientific men, without reference to revelation, bringing out results that substantiate the truth of the Bible. For instance; one very celebrated physiologist has shown that

our earth must within five thousand years have been subjected to some dreadful and disturbing catastrophe, the evidence of which is to be found in all nations. On the tops of the Alps and the Apennines we find marine shells, skeletons of fishes, and of creatures whose native element is the ocean. How were they brought to that lofty summit? If we go into some inland districts of England, we shall find marine shells upon the chalk cliffs by hundreds and thousands. They stare the infidel in the face as he rides by them, and tell him that God's word is true. We find the deer, which is a native of America, buried in Ireland; the elephant of India, a native of the torrid zone, in parts of Germany; skeletons of whales in various parts of England; bones of extinct races in the Cordilleras, 7,000 feet high. How came these creatures from the very ends of the earth, to be located in soils so distant from their native and congenial homes? How were they raised to such heights? The answer is probable, reasonable, and true, that they were deposited there by a great flood that overflowed the world; and they now remain, dumb, but expressive monuments that God's word is true. There is also evidence in the

state of the earth of a disruptive torrent having rolled from the south.

Infidels have objected to *the account of the ark*, and have asserted that it is quite absurd to suppose that ever there could be a vessel constructed large enough to hold all the creatures that must have been placed in it, together with sufficient food (it may be, for six or twelve months)—water for the fishes, corn for the four-footed animals, seeds for the birds, and so on. Now we will take the dimensions of the ark from the record of Moses, and calculate them on the lowest possible scale. There are two definitions given of a cubit—one that it is eighteen inches, or a foot and a half, the other that it is one foot and eight inches; we will take it only at the lowest. Moses states that the ark was 300 cubits long; this would make it 450 feet long, or about the length of St. Paul's Cathedral. The breadth of it he states to be 50 cubits; we have it then 75 feet in breadth. He states it to be 30 cubits high; so that it was 45 feet in height. In other words, it was long as St. Paul's Cathedral, nearly as broad, and about half as high. The tonnage of the ark, according to the calculation of modern carpenters, must have

been about 32,000 tons. The largest ship of war—the St. Vincent, for instance, which is of a size altogether unimaginable to those who have never seen it—is 2,500 tons burden; so that the ark must have been equal *to seventeen first-rate ships of war*, and if armed as such ships are, it would have contained much beyond 18,000 men, and provisions for them for eighteen months. Now Buffon has stated, that all the four-footed animals may be reduced to 250 pairs, and the birds to a still smaller number. On calculation, therefore, we shall find, that the ark would have held more than five times the necessary number of creatures, and more than five times the required quantity of food to maintain them for twelve months. Fair and indisputable arithmetic adds its testimony to inspiration, and proves that God's word is true.

Another objection adduced against the truth of the sacred narrative, is found in the statements put forth by infidels *respecting the rainbow*. Our translation states, that when Noah stepped forth from the ark, God said, "I do set my bow in the cloud," as a symbol that the waters of the ocean should never again overflow so as to depopulate the

globe. Now the literal rendering is, "I do *appoint* my bow in the cloud;" and the very expression shows that the rainbow must have existed prior to the flood, though it was subsequent to the flood that it became a symbol or sacramental sign, to denote that the world should never again be overflowed. If there were rain-drops and sun-beams before the flood, there must have been rainbows; because the rainbow is produced by the refraction of the rays of light from the drops of water which fall in a shower. But the Bible does not assert that God created the rainbow immediately after the flood, but that He then applied it to this special use, just as He applied the twelve stones set up after the children of Israel had crossed the Jordan, as He still applies bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and water in baptism—namely, old things for new uses, sacred symbols to give consolation and peace to true believers.

Another objection adduced by infidels against the statements of the Mosaic record, is, that the whole story of the *building of the tower of Babel* seems absurd. Now we reply, that unless they can show evidence demonstrative of its absurdity, we are not prepared to reject a historical fact, because to

the squeamish taste of the infidel it appears to convey notions of absurdity. But to confirm the statement of Sacred Writ, we may state (as infidels would generally believe any body sooner than Moses and Paul), that Herodotus and Strabo, two ancient historians, both assert, that there was a tower built in Chaldea, called the tower of Belus, and that there were walks upon it, along which two chariots could drive abreast. And the remains discovered of it, as related by modern travellers, prove, that the account of the tower of Babel, declared to be absurd by infidels, is seen to be a fact by the researches of travellers, as well as the records of heathen historians.

Another objection is, that the narrative of the *destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah* is absurd, and not founded in fact. Heathen writers refer to the very same thing; and that, moreover, on the soil on which those guilty capitals once stood, there are at this moment, as travellers have shown, distinct traces of such an overthrow as that recorded in the word of God. Modern travellers declare, that the Dead Sea, on the site of which those cities stood, is so filled with saline and bituminous matter, that the moment fish are

carried down the clear waters of the Jordan into it they perish. It is not true that birds cannot fly across it; but still it is of a very deleterious character, and the whole country around it presents the bleakest and most uninviting prospects that man can imagine. The downfall of Sodom and Gomorrah, therefore, is still indicated by their sites, and is historically true.

Another objection is, the notion of *Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt*, which is so ridiculous (it is said) as to be absolutely improbable. I think, on the contrary, when you consider the circumstances of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is highly probable. Lot's wife was commanded not to look back upon burning Sodom. She disobeyed; out of the same curiosity that prompted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, she disobeyed the command of God. Instantly she was arrested (it is true, by a miracle, but a miracle that used the very circumstances in which she was placed), and became a salso-bituminous mass; the sulphur and fire that were falling upon Sodom and Gomorrah, were made, by a righteous and offended God, to fall upon her, and petrify her into a monument of the

Divine judgments. The statement may not, however, of necessity mean, what we have supposed, that she was changed into muriate of soda, or what we call strictly salt; but, as "I will make with you a covenant of salt," means "a perpetual covenant," so "Lot's wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt," may mean that she was there petrified, and stood a lasting monument of God's judgment on disobedience to his righteous will.

Again; it has been objected, that in the account which we have of the miracles of Moses performed in Egypt, and of the counter-miracles performed by the Egyptian magicians, we see so slight a difference that we must believe that the *magicians evidently did miracles as real and as good as those of Moses*. They build this statement upon the fact recorded in the eighth chapter of Exodus, where it is added, when Moses performed miracles, "And the magicians did so with their enchantments;" and allege this to be a proof that the miracles of Moses were not beyond human power, since what he did, his rivals copied and performed also. It is not so clear that they did so. The context proves, that the words "they did so," mean, "they

attempted to do so ;” and we shall find the proof of this in the very facts of the case. For instance ; when Moses turned into blood all the waters of the river, the streams from every fountain, all that was in pail, or pitcher, or vessel of any kind, it is added, “ And the magicians did so with their enchantments ;” but if Moses had turned *all* the water into blood, they could only attempt to do something like it, because, in reality, no water was left to be turned into blood. When Moses, again, by the command of God evoked frogs, and covered the whole land with these noxious animals, and the frogs were “ in their houses, and in their chambers, in their ovens and in their kneading troughs,” alike in the cottage and in the palace, it is added, “ The magicians did so with their enchantments ;” but if the *whole* land was already covered, it is clear that they could not visibly create and call forth more ; they could only attempt to do it. Moreover, if the magicians had been possessed of miraculous power, when the Egyptians wished to banish the frogs from the land, here was an opportunity for the exercise of their power ; but they were unable to do so. And in the eighth chapter we have a most decisive proof that “ did so ” simply

means "attempted to do so;" for when Aaron brought lice upon man and upon beast, it is added (verse 18,) "and the magicians *did so* with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not;" and they themselves acknowledged, "This is the finger of God." They were conscious, that what they did before was merely a sort of legerdemain, or sleight-of-hand work. They attempted this as they did the rest; but when they saw that they could not mimic, with any visible success, this miracle of Heaven, or deceive the senses any more, they confessed, "This is the finger of God." We may give the same explanation of their turning their rods into serpents; the Hindoos and Chinese at this day profess to do this, as well as to swallow swords; and from habit they are so expert at these feats, that they can make persons believe that they swallow the sword which is in their right hand, and that they turn the rod in their left hand into a serpent. The ancient magicians were no doubt masters of this art.

Some one perhaps will say, "But why perform these miracles at all? what was the necessity or meaning of it?" The answer is, the first design was to convince the har-

dened Pharaoh that God's power was on the side of Israel. And if it be asked why so *peculiar*, and, to us, repulsive miracles were adopted, I answer, for great ends. The Nile, for instance, was the very God the Egyptians worshipped, and the turning its waters into blood was a powerful rebuke to their idolatry. The serpent they also worshipped, as ancient inscriptions still show, and the turning of the rod of Aaron into a serpent, and causing it to swallow up the rest, was also a no less expressive demonstration against their idolatry. The whole of these miracles were not merely arbitrary exhibitions and expressions of power, but also great and significant punishments of the gross and debasing idolatry which the Egyptians universally practised.

Another objection, worthy of notice, is that made to *the genealogies of our Lord*, recorded, the one by Matthew, and the other by Luke. But by referring to these genealogies, we shall see at once that there is not a particle of contradiction between them. Matthew, in giving his genealogy of our Lord, writes for the Jews, and gives the genealogy of Joseph, the *reputed* or *legal* father of our Lord. The name of every child of Israel

was entered in the public records, and his father's and mother's name, in order to be standing memorials of their descent; and Matthew, in the first chapter, begins with "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob," and so on, until in the sixteenth verse we read, "And Matthan begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The evidence, then, is decisive, that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph. Now let us refer to the Gospel of Luke; Matthew traces the genealogy from Abraham to Joseph, but Luke traces the genealogy from Christ to Abraham, and thence to Adam. Accordingly, we read in the third chapter of Luke—"And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son of Matthat," and so on—son evidently meaning son-in-law. The infidel says, "How can this be true? According to Matthew, we find Joseph represented as the son of Jacob, who was the son of Matthan; but according to Luke, we find Joseph represented as the son of Heli, who was the son of Matthat. How can both be correct?" The answer is this: in Matthew, there is

traced the genealogy of Joseph, and it is thereby proved that the reputed father of Christ was of the seed of Abraham and David; in Luke, the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Christ, is traced, and it is thereby shown that by the mother's side he was of the seed of David and the son of Abraham. In Luke, be it observed, the words "the son" are in italics; that is, they are not in the original; and the literal rendering is—"Being, as was supposed" (or reputed in the public tablets,) "the *son*," but, in reality, the *son-in-law*, "of Heli," and so on. In the one, you have the genealogy of Joseph; in the other, the genealogy of Mary; and instead of any collision between the two, there is ample proof of that unintended and natural harmony, which shows that they wrote as they were inspired by the Spirit of God.

A question has been asked by objectors to revelation—"If Christianity be the boon that you represent, *why was God so long in disclosing this unsearchable and saving blessing to the mass of lost mankind?*" Now I answer this by asking a few other questions; and when the objector has answered my questions, it will be time for me to reply to his. I ask, Why did the Providence of

God allow so many years to transpire, before a Howard was found to visit the cells and the dungeons of Europe, to lighten and relieve their miseries? Why did the Providence of God allow so long time to elapse, before the tongue of a Wilberforce was heard within the walls of the senate of England, pleading for the African slave? Why did Providence suffer so long a period to pass, before the West Indian slavery was utterly destroyed forever by the senate and the laws of Great Britain? Why was vaccination, that great discovery of modern times, so long in being found out, seeing it is such an alleviation of human disease and such an admirable source of human health? Why were so many years allowed to transpire before the secret powers of steam were discovered, and man thereby enabled to travel as philanthropists or missionaries, at a velocity, of which our forefathers never dreamed? Now when the objector has answered all my questions, which involve the providence of God, then I will answer his question, which seems to him to involve the revelation of God.*

[* Nothing was lost by the delay. The Mediation was retrospective in its influence, as well as prospective.]

EDITOR PRES. BOARD OF PUB.

Another objection has been drawn from the limited spread of Christianity. It is said—"If Christianity be so transcendent a blessing, why is not the *whole world brought under its saving and its sanctifying power?*" Do we not find it to be matter-of-fact in almost every other province, and in respect to almost every other benefit, that the greatest blessings are enjoyed by the few? Do we not find, that literature, which has arisen to great height and perfection in England, is not known in large portions of Asia and Africa? Are not civilization—freedom—the national, social, and moral blessings enjoyed, and gratefully enjoyed, in England—strangers to Spain, Italy, and Africa? So that when the objector has explained why some of our greatest national and social blessings are restricted to the few, and not distributed among the many, in the providence of God, it will be the time for us to explain why Christianity is restricted to the few, and not extended to the many, in the dispensation of the grace of God. The God of Providence is chargeable with the results of the first—if the God of Grace be with those of the last. I may add, however, that the Gospel promotes its triumph by moral and spiritual

weapons; it appeals to men as possessed of judgment, of conscience, and of responsibility; and rather than use one weapon interdicted in the sacred pages, it will wait patiently at the door of man's obdurate heart, knocking for admission still, and promising still, if he will open the door, the Saviour "will come in to him, and will sup with him."

"How comes it to pass, if the Bible be a revelation of God's mind, that there *are so many varieties of opinion about it?* The Independent draws one conclusion, the Baptist another, the Presbyterian a third, the Episcopalian a fourth, the Socinian a fifth, the Roman Catholic a sixth; and why all this? If it be a revelation of God's mind, why such varieties of opinion?" Some of these are but circumstantial differences. But may we not ask why such variety of opinion on every subject that comes under the cognizance of man? If variety of interpretation be admitted as a disproof of the excellence of a document, it will land us in results we little expect. Take an Act of Parliament, when the House of Commons and the House of Lords have successively expended their wisdom and their eloquence in discussing

it, and the queen has inspected and approved it, and set her seal to it; wait for twelve months, and we shall find that Chancery is full of litigation as to the meaning of that very Act of Parliament. And what does this demonstrate? That it is impossible in imperfect language to convey ideas so fully, that man's frail judgment may not mistake them, and, above all, that man's guilty heart will not distort them. The cause of the litigation is not so much that men really experience a difficulty in forming a right interpretation of the Act of Parliament, but that A. wants this property or that advantage, and B. also wants it; and therefore, pulling in the line of self, each will contend for an interpretation favourable to self.

It is said—"But ministers of the Gospel *do not always live as the Bible prescribes*; and if they present not patterns of its pure and lofty morality, is it not an evidence that they are not in earnest, and that they do not believe the Bible?" But does this disprove the Gospel? The minister who preaches in the pulpit like an angel, and lives in the world like a devil, is the guiltiest man that the sun shines upon, or that treads the surface of the earth. That minister's preaching,

if he preach God's word, is to be revered, but that minister himself is to be shunned if he lives in the practice of gross and open sin, though he should preach in strains a Demosthenes could not rival, or with eloquence an Apollos never reached. But I can never allow that the unholy life of any minister is a proof that Christianity is not right and good. You go to a physician, and he writes out a prescription for you, and gives you regulation as to diet and regimen and habits, as to what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and what course is the most healthy and most conducive to long life. You follow that physician to the dinner table or into society, and you find that he does not live according to the prescriptions and restrictions he has laid upon you; do you therefore say, that his prescription is wrong? Not at all; you try the prescription notwithstanding, and you find it is right, though he does not live according to it. So say I here; the prescription is good, the "balm in Gilead" is precious, the blood of Jesus is worthy to be made known and believed holy and free as the air, though all the physicians that declare its virtue should

lie against it by their lives. Judge the man by the word, not the word by the man.

It is objected that the Gospel has led to wars, to impostures, to crimes, and to innumerable mischiefs. Christianity is not justly to be charged with the deeds that have been done in its sacred, but injured name. Christianity is not to be made responsible for the fearful deeds of the Inquisition, of Smithfield, of the Bartholomew massacre, and of the Sicilian Vespers, all of which it rebukes. These sprang from the wickedness of man's heart, and not from Christianity. Nor is it to be charged with the wild and extravagant fanaticism of Joanna Southcote and others. These were the corrupters and abusers of the truth, not its legitimate exponents. The very best blessings we possess may be abused. Men may blaspheme in their prayers, or talk treason in their ordinary conversation, or poison each other in their meals; but do we therefore infer, that we are not to pray, nor to talk, nor to eat? No; we are all too "wise in our generation," in the things of this world. Why, then, so inconsistent in regard to the things of a brighter and better world? Why quote man's abuse as disproof of the excellence of God's gifts? The abuse of any

blessing by man is no proof that the blessing is not of God.

It is said, *there are mysteries in the sacred volume* which we cannot understand, and therefore it cannot be a revelation from God to us.

True, there are mysteries in the sacred volume; but if there had been no mysteries in it, the infidel would have said, "This cannot be the inspiration of God; it wants those mysterious and incomprehensible features we might have expected from a revelation of the Infinite."

The fact is, that a revelation of the incomprehensible God *must* contain some mysteries not comprehensible by man. The exhibition of that which is infinite, unsearchable, and immeasurable, must surely be beyond the finite and puny understanding of man to appreciate or comprehend fully. Its mysteries are presumptions in its favour. But what would you think of a school-boy, if he were to say that the Newtonian philosophy is false because he cannot comprehend it? Your reply would be—"That philosophy is demonstrated to be true, whether you can comprehend it or not, and your present comprehension is no test of its truth or the

reverse." The fault is in the mind, not in the subject. Does the infidel meet with no mysteries in the world around him? Let him explain to me the courses of the stars; or in language I can understand, the circulation of the blood, the pulsation of the heart, the effects of volition, or the union that knits the soul to its earthly and perishable tabernacle. After he has explained the mysteries of a blade of grass or a grain of dust, the mysteries of the earth on which he treads, the mysteries of the ocean on which he sails, the mysteries of the sky on which he looks, the mysteries which his own body and his own soul contain, it will be time for us to explain to him the mysteries of the word of God. But if mysteries in creation be no proof that God did not make the world, so mysteries in revelation can be no proof that God did not inspire the Bible. On the contrary, the fact that there are mysteries in it is presumptive evidence that it has God for its author, as it has truth for its matter and salvation for its glorious end. Every new truth we see come within the horizon is intimately related to another, and the more we see the more we find remains to be seen. Truth is infinite, and our progress will be infinite also.

You will find, however, that while the language that describes and the similes that portray the character of God are mysterious and inscrutable, the plan and the mode of salvation, all that is essential to our salvation, are so clear, that the "wayfaring man" may understand and appreciate them. And if I address a reader who objects to Scripture, and says he does not relish and understand it, let me tell him there was a day when I also did not relish the Scripture—when I sat down to peruse it because my father and my mother told me, but I was weary of it and wished it done; nay, there was a day when I doubted of its heavenly origin, and it was not till I had read treatise after treatise, that I came to the conviction, a conviction as strong as that there is a God in heaven, that this book is the book of God. Our taste will be gradually raised to its height by perusing it. Untutored taste often fails to appreciate first-rate excellence. Blessed, blessed be the God who gave such a book to poor lapsed and erring man.

I have no doubt of the conclusion to which any man will come, if he will pursue the course, first of inquiring,—and it is great guilt to decline the trouble of examining a

book which professes to be the book of God; It is telling the Almighty that the knowledge of Him and the matters of eternity and the interests of souls are not worthy of a moment's thought,—next going to it in the spirit of prayer, saying with David, “Oh! send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me and guide me”—bending your knee, proud infidel, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, bowing your spirit before Him, asking Him to show you “the way and the truth and the life.” Suppose that in some part of this little work you should meet with a sentence you do not understand; you might apply to some gifted minister or critic for an explanation of it, but on failing to get satisfaction, you hear that the author is living, and is accessible. Would you not resolve to apply to *him* for a satisfactory explanation? Now do treat God's word as fairly as you would treat man's book; go to the ever present Author, who “hears in heaven His dwelling place;” ask Him in prayer to teach you the meaning of the sacred volume, and He will irradiate that volume with noon-day splendor and fill your mind with noon-day light.

The true way of understanding Scripture

is comparing passage with passage, text with text. As a diamond can be cut best by another diamond, so will one text resolve and explain another. Bishop Horsley, one of the greatest of critics, has said—"It were to be wished that no Bibles were printed without references. Particular diligence should be used in comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testament. It is incredible how much scriptural knowledge one may acquire without any other commentary or exposition, than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish to each other. Let the most illiterate Christian study Scripture in this way, comparing text with text, and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this plain Christian's faith." You will find this arrangement admirably executed in Bagster's Bible.

There are, however, two lights in which a man may read the Scriptures; the light of reason, and the light of the Spirit of God. Critics and scholars have read them in the former light, and passed to that place where—

"Hope withering flees, and Mercy sighs Farewell."

But the illiterate man, who has read them in

the light of God's Spirit, has found in them the way to everlasting life. Suppose I were to go forth to some lovely landscape in some of the most beauteous parts of Scotland, and were to look upon it at the hour of midnight, while the moon shone full around me, I should find it dim and obscure ; I could not trace the windings of the streamlet, nor discern the delicate loveliness of the panorama ; not from any defects in the landscape, but from defects in the medium through which I viewed it. But let me visit it the next day at noon, and I shall see every flower with its beauteous tints, every streamlet meandering towards the ocean, every field in its verdure, every forest in its thick and majestic foliage. The whole landscape is changed. And why ? Because in the hazy light of the moon it could not be distinctly seen, but in the full light of the sun everything is clear and visible. So it is with this book. Read the Bible by the dusky light of reason, and it is covered with a film ; clouds and darkness rest upon it. But bring it with bent knee and with broken heart, and place it beneath the rays of the Sun of Righteousness ; and in the clear light of Christ you will clearly "see light."

CHAPTER X.

DOCTRINAL DIFFICULTIES.

IN the former chapter I explained, and tried to neutralize the objections which the impugnors of Revelation urge against some of the *facts* and characteristic features of Christianity. In this chapter I will endeavour to vindicate the peculiar and characteristic *doctrines* of the Gospel from those objections which have been alleged to be fatal to the claims of Christianity.

We admit there are difficulties in some parts of sacred writ; but we must not fail to recollect, that there is no one science within the range of the cognizance of man, in which difficulties, and great difficulties, are not found; some inexplicable on any known principles, and incomprehensible by human intellect. Are there no difficulties in medicine? are there no difficulties in law? are there no perplexities in the occurrences and employments of ordinary life? And yet no man is so irrational as to infer that there can be

no truth in medicine, nor in law, nor in history, philosophy, or science, because there are depths that the plumb line of man's judgment is unable to fathom, and difficulties man's mind cannot explain. There are difficulties, we again assert, in sacred writ: and if there were no such difficulties there, so vast that my puny mind must fail and sink when it tries to grasp and comprehend them, I should say there was a strong *a priori* presumption that the book was not from God. I must believe, *a priori* that a revelation from God will contain depths that we cannot fathom, heights that we cannot climb, intimations and thoughts from afar we are unable to bring clearly within the horizon of our minds; that it will be like the waters seen by Ezekiel—in some parts reaching to the ancles, in some parts to the knees, in some parts to the middle, and in others “waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.” In the language of one who has well described the sacred volume, “There are shallows in it where lambs may wade, and depths in it where elephants may swim.”

One of the doctrines of sacred writ frequently cavilled at, is the doctrine of the

Trinity. We hold—and all who are worthy of the name of Christian hold—that there is one living and true God, and yet that there is what is called in the language of theology the Trinity—that is, three persons, (the word *person* is perhaps the fullest English rendering of the Greek *ὑποστάσις*) though but one God.

Now if it be asked, Can you explain this?—I answer, No. Can you comprehend this?—I answer, No. But if you add, Do you not then reject this?—I answer, No. Such an inference must lead to universal Pyrrhonism. There are mysteries in every beating heart, mysteries in every blade of grass; but if the incomprehensible nature of facts in any history, or science, or providence, be admitted as arguments against the science to which they severally belong, we must necessarily be plunged in universal scepticism, as well as hurried into an abyss of downright absurdity. The Bible asserts plainly that the Father is God; it asserts as plainly that the Son is God; it asserts as plainly that the Holy Spirit is God; and yet it repeats and reiterates at the very same moment, and with the implied clear recollection of all its separate announcements, that there is but one living

and true God, to whom the name of Triune Jehovah is exclusively applicable. The Scripture announces it as a truth, just as nature evolves a fact; a truth interwoven with our salvation, but inexplicable to our judgment.

But let me ask the mere theist, the man who merely admits the existence of a God, will he escape in his supposed simplicity of creed all such inexplicable mysteries? He will not. What can he make of omnipotence? what can he understand of omnipresence? what can he grasp of omniscience? We cannot understand or comprehend these attributes. It is very well to talk of omnipresence as an axiom; but what can we conceive of a Being here and yet there, in England and yet in India, present in every spot through the vast infinitude of space? What can we comprehend of a Being eternally existent; so that when he have added millions and millions upon millions more of years, we have not reached His age, nor measured the duration of His being, nor arrived nearer the end, nor remoter from the beginning? What can we know of eternity? Literally nothing; it is perfectly incomprehensible; it is an unsearchable depth. And if the fact that the Trinity is incomprehen-

sible leads you to reject revelation, the fact that eternity, omniscience, omnipresence, attributes you must clothe your God withal, are also incomprehensible, will lead you to deny the existence of a God ; and the deist will land at last in the extreme where difficulties are multiplied, not diminished, the monstrous extreme at which all nature shudders—that we are a family without a father, and inhabit a world without a Creator.

The Trinity is not a contradiction, but a truth partly luminous—as luminous as our vision can bear, and as largely so as our comprehension can grasp. It is a truth distinctly told, but not explained—it is a revelation, but not an analysis. It is so plainly declared that we can easily see *what* it is, but not *how* it is. There is enough told for our salvation, and none for our curiosity—enough for Christians in the closet, the sanctuary, and the death-bed ; but none for philosophers in the Stoa, the Lyceum, or the schools.

There is another doctrine, which has been the subject of the scorn of the infidel ; namely, predestination, or election. The Scriptures assert, in the plainest terms, that “whom God did foreknow, He also did

predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son;" and again, "He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world," not because we were holy, but "that we should be holy." If these passages are admitted to be in the Bible (and I might quote many such), there can be no question that predestination is a Scripture doctrine.

Now it is delightful to every dispassionate inquirer, that here the theology of the Bible and the findings of the highest metaphysics exactly coincide. In that great work, the treatise on the Freedom of the Will, by Jonathan Edwards, the most acute of metaphysicians, we see it proved by principles of pure philosophical investigation, that predestination or moral necessity is a truth.

But, with mystery yet without contrariety, the Scriptures assert, that we are free agents; that we are responsible for our belief, our practice, our reception or rejection of the claims and tenets of Christianity. But the infidel asks—How do you reconcile these? You say that we are predestinated, or elect, and yet you say that we are free agents. I do assert both; and why?—because the Bible distinctly reveals both. On one page it proclaims, "No man *can* come to me, unless the

Father which hath sent me draw him ;” here is God’s sovereignty. On another page “Ye *will* not come to me, that ye might have life ;” here is man’s responsibility. If you ask me, How do you reconcile these ?— I answer, That is not my province. I am not called upon to reconcile, but to receive, revealed truths. The two truths are distinctly announced. In their contact only does mystery evolve. The one teaches me my responsibility, and the other the necessity of Divine help. I can act, and look, and learn, where I cannot reconcile. I have proved this book to be an emanation from God, and this book asserts alike the election of God and the responsibility of man. How they are reconciled, I cannot demonstrate, but that they are reconcilable, I have not a doubt the light of another world will clearly disclose. The defect is not in these truths, but in my understanding. A true philosopher will never reject facts and phenomena in the natural world because he cannot reconcile them ; and a true Christian will not reject doctrines revealed in the Bible for the same reason. Let a person discover one fact in science, and then a second fact, which he cannot harmonize or reconcile or explain

consistently with the first; he does not say, "I will now reject or disbelieve one or both of these facts;" but he says, "I will lay them up in my memory, and subsequent light and maturer investigation may lead me to detect harmony, where at present I discover only discord." Now let us treat the Bible in the same way. Receive facts and doctrines as they are here declared. Let the first and great question be, whether these doctrines be in the Bible; if they are, we are to wait till time shall harmonize those that seemingly differ—not to reject one or both because we cannot at present explain or comprehend them.

I see the two ends of the chain near and luminous, each indicating a plain and obvious duty. Let me not forget these duties in unprofitable attempts to trace out the mysterious intermediate links that connect them.

Another proposition in the Scriptures frequently objected to, is the incarnation of Christ. The infidel asks, How can you suppose that we rational beings will believe that God was man, and yet that man was God; or that God came into our nature and suffered death upon the cross, was crucified as a malefactor, and buried as a criminal? We

answer, the true question is first, Is God's word truth; and next, are these things asserted in it? If they are plainly revealed there, it is not our province, as it may not be in our power, to harmonize or reconcile them. It is our duty, as it is also our privilege, to receive, to believe, to rest upon them.

In the Bible this great doctrine is plainly stated; to our minds it is as plainly incomprehensible how the finite and infinite could coalesce—how Deity and humanity could be in his sufferings, how the deepest capacity of temptation and entire impossibility of being overcome—how want and fulness, strength and weakness, ignorance of “that day and hour” and yet omniscience, could be together. The great fact is clearly written—the mode of its existence is all mystery.

But the idea of the incarnation is not so unnatural and unanticipated by man as many are disposed to think. The ancient heathen entertained a kindred notion. Many of their philosophers believed that God was the soul of the world, and the universe the visible incarnation of God. They believed in what we might call the materialization of God. The Hindoos at this moment enter-

tain an idea that approximates most closely to this, viz.—the incarnation of their Vishnu, or deity. Thus reason in its progress has touched the skirts and caught some beam of the glory of revelation, and risen unaided to some notion very much akin to the incarnation. This great doctrine of the Scriptures is thereby proved to be not so unlikely or so contrary to man's notions that it ought to be rejected at the first blush. True, no logic of man can reconcile the fact, that He who wept on Olivet, was He also who reigned in heaven; that He who bled upon the cross, was He who sat upon the throne; that He who cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—was He who "said, Let there be light, and there was light;" that the infant sleeping in the manger was "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." But though we cannot harmonize these infinite facts, yet we can receive them as the most glorious truths that were ever breathed into the ear or poured into the heart of poor humanity. For what is Christ? He is just the meeting-place—or, as the old Scottish writers would have called it, the *trysting* place—between heaven and earth; he is the filler up of the tremendous

chasm that sin made between God and man—the sacred and holy spot, where man can meet God notwithstanding all his sins, and where God can meet man and yet be a holy and righteous God; He is that sacred *isthmus* between eternity and time, washed by the one and unwashed by the other, within the precincts of which heaven and earth coalesce in glorious and indissoluble harmony, and over which God appears “just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Though we cannot descend to the fathomless glory of this great truth, yet we can see the practical and precious results that flow from the admission of it.

The idolatry of ancient nations was just man’s mind struggling after something like the incarnation. Man had lost God in consequence of sin, and he so felt it. It then became his effort to bring God down to him, seeing he could not rise to God; and in order to do so, he represented Him by stones, by wood, by gold and silver, and such like corruptible things; making the imaginary likeness a substitute for the original. This was man’s anticipation, as it were, of an incarnation—it was nature’s rude presentiment of Christianity—creation’s throes and groans for

the manifestation of God. And when Christ came, He abolished for ever the necessity and made more obvious the guilt of all material personations of God, by presenting in Himself "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person."

Again; it has been contended, that the idea of satisfaction made to God for sin, or the necessity of Christ's dying in order that God might forgive sinners, is contrary to the reason and understanding of man, and inconsistent with such notions of the true God as we are able by nature to attain. Now, the first question upon this, as upon every other doctrine, is—Is the doctrine revealed in Scripture? All revelation distinctly testifies, that Christ died "the just in the room of the unjust, that He might bring us to God"—that we are "redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;" in fact, all the phraseology that was applied to the sacrificial offerings of the Jews, is distinctly and emphatically applied to the perfect atonement and the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.

God demanded this satisfaction, not because He had any pleasure in suffering, or any delight in death; the very reverse. It was not the atonement that was the cause of

God's love, but God's love that was the cause of the atonement. We can perceive no other way according to which God could be true and just and holy, and yet save the chiefest of sinners. If God had relaxed all the penalties of His law, that law which is not a mere *arbitrary* enactment, but the essential, ever obligatory, and eternal expression of His mind, and will, and nature—if He had admitted sinners into heaven without any satisfaction, or atonement, or visible vindication of His character—then Satan's word would have been true; Satan's policy would have triumphed; God's word would have been proved false, and omnipotence overcome. God's assertion was—"In the day that thou eatest thereof, *thou shalt surely die*;" Satan's assertion was—"Ye shall not surely die." Which was to be proved true? If God had admitted to the blessings of His glory the men that broke the rescripts of His law, Satan's prediction would have been proved to be true, and God's proclamation would have been proved to be false. It therefore became necessary, as far as we can see, that God should save sinners in such a way as would show Him the same just, the same holy, the same true God, as if all sinners had been

eternally banished from his presence; and yet the same merciful and loving God, as if all creatures had been universally reclaimed. We therefore see a moral necessity for the atonement of Christ. We cannot see how God could have been enthroned in the supremacy of holy and universal empire, unless by such a process as that which is revealed in the Scriptures

Moreover, if God had admitted sinners into heaven without any exhibition of His hatred of sin, what would other worlds or created intelligences probably have concluded? What would the inhabitants of other stars have said? They must have concluded—"This God is not the holy God we imagined; He winks at sin; He pronounces threats merely as make-believes; He has indeed a law, but it is a law which we may break with impunity." The universe would have been disorganized; God would have been virtually dethroned. Such a God could not have been the God revealed in the Bible. He cannot thus let down His law, and be indulgent, that is, unjust and unholy, in dealing with the sins of mankind. The idea of a God without an atonement pardoning sinners, suggests such perplexities as these.

Will God equally pardon all sinners? The mere theist must answer, No. Will He then equally punish all sinners? The theist must also answer, No. How low will His justice descend in punishing, and how high will His love rise in rewarding? Without the light of revelation we are driven to form an idea of Deity which implies a composite of imperfections; a God imperfectly just in order to be benevolent, and imperfectly benevolent in order to be just.

But, say some, would it not have been better if God had prevented sin altogether, instead of permitting it, and then taking this seemingly round-about way to annihilate and forgive it? We might answer, in the first place—If the fact be plainly revealed in God's book, "who art thou that repliest against God?"

But the very same objection that is thus made to the introduction of sin and sin's curse, may be made with equal force to all that occurs in the world around us. Is not the whole system of the world a system of permitted wrong-doing and of merciful repairing; a system of disease and of cure; a system of suffering and of amendment; a system of pain and of subsequent pleasure?

If the suffered introduction of evil tells against God's book of revelation, will not the suffered action of it tell against God's providence? Why has God permitted disease and pain, and suffering and distress, instead of preventing them? Why allow them to be, and then take a round-about way to repair and amend them?

In what way could God have prevented sin from coming into the world? Man was made a free agent—responsible—without any bias to sin or to wickedness. If God had restrained Adam by physical coercion, man would not have been a free and responsible being. He was left to the freedom of his own will, with a bias to holiness, and yet he rebelled and revolted against God.

An archangel fell. Could man stand? May it not be true that in Christ only can the universe stand? that redemption, not creation, is the only platform on which man or seraph can abide in holiness? May not the permitted fall have been only a preliminary to the perfect redemption?

It has been asserted, in the next place, that the system of mediation and of a Mediator revolts against all our experience. This is but the following out of the same objection. But

is the system of a Mediator between God and man not in accordance with the findings of human experience, and the analogies of human nature? We believe it is in beautiful harmony with the works and ways of God, discoverable elsewhere, that the provision of a Mediator between God and man is only the addition of a kindred link to the chain of mediation that girds the world and upholds creation around us. For instance; when the mother brings her infant into the world, and nurses and tends it at her breast, what is that mother, but, in a sense, a mediatrix towards that infant? When a man by accident, or in the practice of sin, breaks a bone of his body, we find that nature gives out at the fractured part a substance (the name of which I know not,) and commences a process of mediation, by which the loss is supplied, the fracture healed, and the limb restored. Or if a sinew in the human frame is cut, nature begins immediately a process of mediation at the divided part, repairs the breach, and heals the wound. What is this, but mediation in our families and mediation in our corruptible bodies? We thus see mediation going on in nature; and if nature mediates in man's body, shall God be forbid-

den to mediate in man's soul? If nature heals the wounds that take place in the one, by a mediatory process, shall it be thought incongruous in God to restore that union between the soul and God, which has been broken and interrupted by sin, by the interposition of a Mediator who shall lay one hand on the throne of God, and the other on the crushed, broken, and guilty heart of man, and bind both into one? Thus creation bears affinities to revelation, and both indicate a common Author so truly, that he who admits the one, cannot, without inconsistency, reject the other.

Do we not see the very same process illustrated in providence? What is an asylum, provided by the benevolence of the charitable for the relief and healing of the wounded and the sick, but a sort of mediatorial institution? What was the apostle, but a sort of mediator in his place? What is the missionary, but a sort of mediator in his toils? And what has been the history of the world, but a history of mediation—the “father sowing in tears,” the “children reaping in joy”—the forefathers bearing the brunt of battle, the tumult of the storm, and we, the children, reaping the laurels

of peace, the sunshine, and the calm? Thus every man is in one sense a mediator; and all that we have to admit, in order to admit the mediation of the gospel, is, that there is the addition of a new and more glorious link to this chain which wraps the world and connects together all its tenantry—a link that binds the sinner to his Saviour, the creature to his Creator, lost man to his reconciled God.

In the next place, it has been objected by the infidel, that if there be, as astronomy teaches us, thousands and thousands more of worlds, it seems altogether inconsistent with just views of the character of God and of the vastness of His empire, that He should be so much interested in this petty world, which is but as a grain of sand in comparison with the thousands that fill infinite space; that He should be so taken up with it, that He should come and be incarnate and die in it, when there are thousands of orbs a thousand times bigger and more worthy of and entitled to our Creator's care. To this I reply as before, that the same Bible which gives the clearest proofs of the moral glory of God, declares it to have been so; were there no explanations satisfactory to our

minds, the simple announcement of the fact on God's authority would be enough.

But do we not find, in this world, that a king selects a particular spot, it may be but a little corner of his empire, to be the lesson-book in which all the rest of his subjects may read political, moral, and social lessons? And may not this earth, minute as it may be, amid the countless orbs that fill the infinitude of space, be that consecrated corner, in which the King eternal has engraven in characters that shall live for ever the lessons of His holiness, His justice, His mercy, and His truth? May not this earth be that living and legible tablet, from which there beams forth "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace," in important and precious lessons to thousands and thousands more of worlds that are around it? As there are worlds beyond worlds infinitely, may not scenes visible on earth reach these worlds in succession? Light would travel from the earth to the sun in four minutes. There may be worlds so much more remote from the sun, that Calvary may just now be visible to their inhabitants, whose organs see as many millions of miles as we do inches.

The analogies of our experience in another way bear out the proposition, that God should thus have regard to this little world amid the thousands that are around it. If a shepherd have lost one sheep, doth he not, in the beautiful words of our Lord, "leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost until he find it?"—and when he has found it, he rejoices over it with more joy than over the ninety and nine that remained in their fold. Or, to vary the lesson, if a mother has a family of many children, and if one has gone astray—if he has gone to distant lands, or is on the far-off bosom of the deep—is it not true, that every gale that blows, every surge that dashes, every messenger that comes from abroad, awakens more anxiety in that mother's heart, than all her children that never wandered or strayed from home? and does she not exert more efforts to restore and expend more anxieties upon the safety of that one wandering child, than upon all the rest who have been ever with her at her fire-side? Thus do we find the analogies of our experience in perfect consonance with the disclosures of sacred writ. This world is the strayed star, that has gone far away from the Sun of Righteousness; and God has come

after it, in the mightiness of His mercy, to reclaim and to restore it. Man is the prodigal child, that has left his Father's house, and wasted his substance in riotous living; and God has gone after him, to recover him and to bring him home; and the accents of joy have filled high heaven, because the lost one is found, the dead at length is once more alive.

It is in vain for infidels and others to bring objections against the Gospel from the disclosures of astronomy; for the more we examine the facts of this science, the more do we find it bear out the great truths contained in the Gospel. Not only do its facts confirm, but its disclosures illustrate the truths of Christianity. Sir Isaac Newton, the wisest of human philosophers and the greatest of human intellects, discovered that the same law of gravitation keeps a planet in its orbit and regulates the pendulum of a common clock; that the same law that determines the path of a planet, determines the fall of a feather or a leaf also. Now may not this show a new analogy between astronomy and revelation? There is that in the Gospel, which corresponds to gravitation. It is the love of God. It is the gravitation of Christianity. This

love of God retains the orphan in his allegiance, the saint in his attachment, the angel in his place, and the hierarch in his holiness before and around the throne. The same principle that binds the sinner to his God, binds also the archangel to his Creator. Gravitation is in the material world, what love to God is in the moral and spiritual world. It may be found by yet deeper discoveries, that astronomy, instead of impugning revelation, will peal from star to star that Christianity is truth, and all true science, like all redeemed things, shall eventually bow the knee to Jesus and acknowledge Him; and its Newtons and its Laplaces, reluctantly or willingly, do homage to the Lamb that sitteth on the throne.

It has been said by objectors to revelation, that all the experience of man is against the idea of a resurrection of the body. We maintain, on the contrary, that all experience is decidedly in favour of such a hereafter existence to man. Look, for instance, at the unattractive insect that lies upon the blade of grass or upon the cabbage leaf; and in a few short days you find that insect floating in the air, in all the beauteous colours of the rainbow. Look at the dry root in the

gloomy season of winter; and when spring comes forth, you find that root bloom into a beauteous rose. Look at the egg-shell; in that there is the eagle, that is to wing its flight above all other birds, and rivet its eye upon the meridian sun. The doctrine of the resurrection is not inconsistent with the analogies of nature or the experience of our common history.

It has been alleged, that it is contrary to our experience that the soul should live separate from the body. We say, on the other hand, that it is consonant, not contrary to it. As well might you say, when you see the candle burning in the lantern, that because you see that candle in the lantern only, therefore it cannot burn out of it. Because you see the chicken in the egg-shell, would you say it cannot live out of the egg-shell? Would you say, because the child must be in continuity with its mother before it is born, therefore after it is born it cannot live separate from its mother? Such is the reasoning of the man who would say, because he knows of the soul in the body only, therefore there is a presumption that the soul will never live out of the body.

It is said, again, by those who impugn

revelation, that all Divine influence from above exerted on man, or the residence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, is incredible. Kirby, in his Bridgewater Treatise, has asserted, that instinct even in animals is a direct emanation from the Deity; and if this should be so, is it not proof that Divine influence is not contrary to our experience or impossible? What does the loadstone teach? what enables it to direct the mariner upon the stormy deep, and to guide him in his course by pointing towards the pole? An influence given it from above. Study the hop-plant; if there is no pole to support it when it springs up, it spreads along the ground as if in search of one, and on a pole being placed near it, it moves more rapidly in that direction, clings to it as in ecstasy, and grows with double speed, as if to reimburse itself for delay, and rejoice that it has found its support. Is not this an influence given it for its preservation? Or I take you to the sunflower, that inclines its blossom ever to the sun in his daily course. What is this but a sort of Divine influence imparted even to the vegetables? And if the hop is thus enabled by some mysterious impulse to cling to the pole that supports it,

shall it be thought inconsistent with our experience, that man's sinking soul shall be taught and drawn by the Spirit of God to cling to the Rock of ages, the Rod of Jesse, the Lord Jesus Christ?

It has been objected, that there appears in the revelations of Scripture a disproportion between sin and the punishment of sin hereafter, and that this disproportion is so palpable that it revolts against all the experience and the analogies of nature. It is not in our judgment contrary to the experience and the analogies of nature. Sin against God is of infinite demerit. For instance; if an equal strike an equal, it is a great offence; if a soldier strike his superior officer, it is a greater offence; if a subject strike his king, it is held in human law to be a still greater offence; so that the principle is in our experience admitted, that the offence rises in aggravation according to the dignity of the person against whom it is perpetrated. Who, then, is prepared to deny, that man's sin against an infinite God may not rise to the amount of an infinite offence? Who shall determine the extent and measure of the analogy you sanction? Who is prepared to prove, since sin rises in aggravation according to the dig-

nity of him against whom it is committed, that it may not rise to an infinite turpitude when committed against an infinite God, and thus justly merit infinite retribution?

Moreover we see even a small offence actually lead to a very heavy punishment. A single rash or false word may lead to mischiefs, that centuries cannot repair; and here is surely a disproportion between the offence and the penalty, even in the dealings of Providence, and in our experience in this world. A sober man begins to drink, and to indulge in habits of intoxication; and the consequence of the apparently trifling act, his taking so many glasses of alcohol, are, that his family are starving, his character is blasted, his body is diseased, and his soul probably lost. So that we see, in this world, what seems to be a trivial offence followed by a punishment to us apparently disproportioned.

In the next place, it has been contended, that Christianity itself states, that the learned, and the wise, and the great, are not generally professors of its faith, and do not admit its truth and its inspiration of God. We answer, that it does indeed say that "not many wise men are called," but it is men "wise in their own conceit;" "not many mighty, not many

noble," if this passage refer to private believers—but it is chiefly those who believe themselves so. And the experience of its truths in the heart, is different from believing them in the mind. It is fact, however, that the very *élite* of human intellect, the lights and the ornaments of the human race, have been devout and faithful followers of the Lamb of God. Need I tell you, that Newton, the first genius in astronomy, was a devout and a praying Christian? that Milton, whose name ranks highest in the fields of poesy, was a humble Christian? that Locke, the greatest of metaphysicians, was a most devoted Christian? that Euler and Kepler, and other most distinguished names, that have shed a halo upon the world through which they passed by their vast and splendid discoveries, were devout and sincere Christians? And though it be true that we are not to believe Christianity because great men have believed it, though it be true that we are "not to call any man Master," yet may we rest assured, when such men, after patient research, come to the conclusion that the Bible is the word of God, it becomes us moderate men at most to pause before we

reject what their gifted minds received on their competent and sufficient investigation.

It has been asserted, further, that the leading doctrine of Christianity—justification by faith alone—leads to immorality. This is an objection of the infidel and Roman Catholic together. Our reply to it is, that the same Bible, which tells us that we are “justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” tells us also that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord ;” the same book that declares that morality is useless as a *plea*, tells us it is *essential* as an evidence; that same book that tells us that morality cannot be admitted to constitute our *right to heaven*, yet declares that morality is essential to constitute our *qualification for heaven* ; the same book that tells us that we are justified freely through the death of Christ Jesus, tells us also that this grace “teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” And the man, be he minister or be he hearer, who does not adorn, in his life, in his practice, in his conduct, in his intercourse in the world, the gospel he professes, knows nothing about justification by Christ in his

heart, whatever he may know about it in his head.

But we contend that this doctrine is pre-eminently calculated to produce morality. Man, it is universally admitted, is a sinner ; he hates God, and breaks his law. Now what does this book declare to be the fulfilling of the law, or the very essence of obedience ? Love. If I love my queen, it necessarily prompts me to be loyal to her ; if I love my parents, that sustains filial duty ; and if I love my God, I have in that love the very essence and element of obedience to his commands. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." The question, then, is, Does this doctrine of free acceptance through the blood of Christ, produce love in man's heart to God ? If it does, obedience is eminently secured. We answer, it does. If some individual hated me, and I were to *command* that individual to love me, he would not love me because I commanded him ; or if I were to *promise* him rank and wealth he would not love me ; or if I were to *threaten* him with all sorts of tortures at my service he would not love me. Love, in the human heart, cannot be created by threatenings, it scorns promises, and laughs at all commands. How,

then, am I to make that man love me? If I were to make some extraordinary sacrifice, risk my property or my life for that man, that would draw him irresistibly to forego his hatred and to love me. My manifested love to him would create returning love to me. Now just so here. God may command, threaten, or promise, but the sinner will not love Him; He, therefore, according to what we find to be the soundest philosophy, as well as scriptural divinity, has evoked our love by the surest process—"God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son," who came into our world, and died upon the cross for us, and now with His pierced and outstretched hands He asks, Sinner, sinner dost thou not love Me? There is in that demonstration a power to melt man's hard heart that has been felt by millions; and "we love Him because He first loved us."

To produce the intensest love is to secure the highest obedience. "Eye-service" will create a partial obedience, interest will secure a temporary obedience, but love will secure perfect and unvaried obedience—an obedience that shrinks from no difficulties, that pauses at no duties, that overcomes all threats,

and triumphs over all opposition. Such is the force of love. We have heard of a Codrus, whose love to his country led him to die for it. We have heard of a Romulus, and a Quintus Curtius, who prompted by this mighty impulse, could brave death in its most appalling shapes. We have heard of parents who encountered the wild billow and the dread storm to save their children. Love in one cherished to another, will accomplish what no principle or power can prompt to. In Scotland a peasant woman had a child a few weeks old, which was seized by one of the golden eagles, the largest in the country, and borne away in its talons to its lofty eyrie on one of the most inaccessible cliffs of Scotland's bleak hills. The mother, perceiving her loss, hurried in alarm to its rescue, and the peasantry, among whom the alarm spread, rushed out to her aid. They all came to the foot of the tremendous precipice; the peasants were anxious to risk their lives in order to recover the little infant; but how was the crag to be reached? One peasant tried to climb, but was obliged to return; another tried, and came down injured; a third tried, and one after another failed, till a universal feeling of despair and deep sorrow fell upon the crowd as they gazed upon the eyrie where the

infant lay. At last a woman was seen, climbing first one part, and then another, getting over one rock, and then another; and while every heart trembled with alarm, to the amazement of all they saw her reach the loftiest crag, and clasp the infant rejoicingly in her bosom. This heroic female began to descend the perilous steep with the child; moving from point to point; and while every one thought that her next step would precipitate her and dash her to pieces, they saw her at length reach the ground with the child safe in her arms. Who was this female? why did she succeed when others failed? It was THE MOTHER of the child. And what made her overcome every obstacle? There was a tie between that mother's heart and the infant, that drew her to its place, and nerved her to brave every difficulty, and to succeed where all beside had failed. It was love. The fact is a proof of its might and its capabilities. Implant love to God in the sinner's heart, and it will bind him with fervour to His laws, and its possessor will obey all righteousness, love every holy precept, overcome every difficulty, and brave all dangers. It is the tie that binds him to his Saviour, and draws him irresistibly to His service. Are not they the holiest who trust

least in the merit of their works? Is not that country most moral where justification by faith is proclaimed most freely?

It has been alleged by infidels, that Christianity as a whole is one great system of priestcraft, and gain, and priestly domination. This is one of the favourite charges of the more vulgar infidels. We are to take our conception of the Christian priesthood, not from what we see in the world, but from God's inspired word. If this book says, that ministers are to prey on the property of their flocks, or to indulge in carnal pleasures, or to be "lords over God's heritage," then the objection may be fatal; but if this sacred book proclaims the very reverse, then such objection is, not to Christianity as it is found in its recognized standard, but to Christianity as it has been diluted and corrupted by man. I look, then, for the delineation of a minister as it is drawn in the word of God. Here it is:—"Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart; but foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes, and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose them-

selves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." And again; "A bishop" (and the word is used convertibly with "presbyter," the two words being synonymous in the usages of the New Testament,)—"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient; not a brawler, not covetous: one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." These are not descriptions of a system of priestcraft; these verses do not say that Christian ministers are to be greedy and domineering.

Let me add, that the very men who would keep back every thing approaching pecuniary competency to the clergy, are the men who do not object to extravagance in other things. They will expend ten times as much upon an article of furniture, or pleasure, or dress, as

they pay for a pew in the house of God for twice twelve months; they will give freely as much for a box at the opera for a single night, as for a seat at a hundred sermons and services. Not a fiftieth part of what is expended on unnecessary luxuries and mere amusements is given to the missionary box, or to the cause of Christ.

And now, in concluding these replies to objections urged against Christianity, let me state what in my conscience I believe, as well as what in my experience I have found, to be the cause, I do not say of *all*, but certainly of *most* men's infidelity:—their infidelity is the offspring of the heart, not of the head.* No jury at a trial, no judge examining the merits of a case and finding it proved, has such overwhelming evidence for the verdict of the one, or the sentence of the other, as we have for the truth of the word of God. Of all evidence it is the most accumulated and powerful; and the man who rejects the Bible, not only shuts his eyes to noon-day brightness, but to be consistent, ought to reject almost every thing that constitutes the sum of human knowledge, and every fact

* [See a little book, published by the Pres. Board of Publication, entitled "The Causes and Cure of Scepticism."] EDITOR.

that enters into the world's history. Infidelity, I feel sure, is more in the heart than in the head; the affections, not the faculties, cradle it; sin, not reason, nurses it. And if it thus nestles in the heart, thence man cannot remove it. If it existed in the head only, reason might be able to overcome it; but if it be intertwined with the heart, God's Holy Spirit can alone change the heart, and expel its unbelief. I once met with an acute and enlightened infidel, with whom I reasoned day after day, and for hours together. I submitted to him the internal, the external, and the experimental evidences, but made no impression on his scorn and unbelief. At length I entertained a suspicion that there was something morally, rather than intellectually wrong, and that the bias was not in the intellect, but in the heart. One day therefore I said to him—"I must now state my conviction, and you may call me uncharitable, but duty compels me; you are living in some known and gross sin." The man's countenance became pale; he bowed and left me, and I never again met with him to discuss the evidences of Christianity. I afterwards learned that what I suspected was the fact; the man could not embrace sin and the

Gospel simultaneously, and was therefore trying to crush the Gospel, because he wished to keep his sin.

I may mention another instance of an individual, whose name is very notorious, and who has been long propagating infidelity among the lower ranks with fearful success. This miserable man had an only daughter lying upon a sick-bed. His wife, I may observe, who had died, was in her life-time a devoted, spiritual-minded, and praying Christian. When the daughter's death was very near, and all hope of restoration was utterly dissipated, she called her father to her bedside, and said—"My mother died a Christian some years ago, rejoicing in Jesus, and assured of heaven; *you* are a disbeliever in Christianity. I am going to make the last venture; am I to die in my mother's faith, or in yours?" "I beseech you to advise me," she said with earnestness and fervour, "whether I am to die in my mother's faith, or in yours." The father's struggle between affection to his only child and the pride of devotedness to his principles was tremendous; but at last, amid a burst of tears and in an agony of feeling, the hardened, yet melting infidel said, "Die in your mother's

faith.” And she did die in her mother’s faith. And yet the man, who gave that advice, lives to propagate infidelity in the world, and labours with all the energy he has to make men as contaminated as himself.

But were the mysteries contained in the Bible darker, and the difficulties greater than they are, we are not to wait till all are removed before we embrace the gospel. It is increase of intellectual light that reveals beyond it increase of intellectual darkness; mysteries multiply with discoveries. The astronomer does not reject what he knows because there is much beyond he cannot see. He looks upward on a star-lit evening, and views with wonder those countless altar-fires that burn incense in perpetual silence. He borrows the aid of the telescope, and while it increases the range and clearness of his vision, it discloses greater and more impenetrable clusters of worlds beyond. Dim and distant spots of light are seen to be solar systems, revolving around a central sun, and that central sun with his revolving systems but another cluster rolling around another central sun ;—and this is but a faint view of the thin suburbs of the heavenly Jerusalem, —a dim sight of the mere sentinels and out-

posts of that innumerable host spread and grouped in the fields of immensity. Let us embrace the gospel heartily—the known,—and wait patiently for the unknown; let us not lose saving truth in prying into hidden mysteries; let us not spend time in inquisitive speculations, and peril eternity by rejecting or neglecting great vital doctrines.

Thousands feel and witness there is revealed more than enough to save them. Christianity has done for them what nothing else could do; it has regained Paradise for them, and fitted them for Paradise; it has spread over them the peace of God; it has erected in their conscience the sceptre of righteousness and the standard of truth.

Nothing can bring a soul *to* God but a religion that came *from* God. A lie never regenerated a soul or sanctified a heart. The greatest mystery in the Bible carries in it a saving truth. Accept the mystery, not as saving you, but as containing the truth that saves you,—not as the healing and restorative wine, but as the cup that contains it. Try not to separate. You cannot throw away the mystery without throwing away the truth it contains.

CHAPTER XI.

TEXTS CAVILLED AT.

GENESIS vi. 6, "It repented the Lord that he had made man." — God the unchangeable cannot repent,—that is, alter his mind, from the occurrence of unforeseen events. This language must be figurative, and meant for our capacity, because the same book declares, "God is not the son of man that he should repent." God takes his stand within the limits of humanity, and makes use, not only of its language, but of its feelings also. Thus he asks, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together." These are the adaptations of heavenly things to human capacities,—great truths darkened by the medium through which they must pass, in order to suit our weak sight. These, too, were perhaps rough drafts of the incarnation,—anthropomorphic appearances of Deity,—to prepare men's minds for God manifest in

the flesh. The complex ritual of the Jews too,—its minute prescriptions about the killing and offering of animals,—have been objected to as unworthy of God. Is it not the fact, that in a tree, a flower, a pebble, there are innumerable minute fibres, grains, or crystals, which seem to us to have been uncalled for? In insects, fishes, and birds, is there not what seems needless variety, division, and subdivision? In short, is there not evidence of the same presence in the works of creation and in the laws of Levi? Are not acts of parliament, decisions of judges, definitions of crime, excessively and wearisomely minute? But all these Levitical laws were partly to serve as a perpetual hedge to preserve the Jews from the universal, contiguous, and imminent idolatry, and to prefigure Him for whose advent they were taught to wait and pray. Their burdensomeness was perhaps appointed of God to lead the Jews to long for a deliverer.

P^s. cxl. 10; P^s. cxxix. 6; P^s. cxliii. 12; P^s. lviii.; P^s. lix.—These are instances of what are called imprecations in Scripture. I might show that some of these expressions might be rendered with equal correctness predictions of what shall be. But I take the

severest sense, and in this light I hesitate not to say they are right. David wrote these, not as a private man venting his personal feelings, but as a judge pronouncing what God had authorized. Their crimes justly deserved these penalties, and David, as the mouthpiece of God, faithfully pronounced them. We find the heathen writers frequently imprecating vengeance on public infamy, and those very persons who object to those judgments in the word of God—so easily vindicated—are not the last to invoke judgments on the heads of those against whom they have private animosity.

Jer. xvii. 9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?"—Many have alleged that this is an exaggerated and over-coloured charge—that we are not such as we are here described to be. Now it is very remarkable that heathen writers use language yet stronger in the same direction. "As soon as we are born," says Cicero, (*Tusc. Quest.* iii. 2,) "and receive the care of our parents, we engage in all kinds of depravity, so much that we seem to suck in error almost with our nurse's milk." Horace (*Sat.* i. 3) says, "No one is born without iniquities," (*Vitiis.*) Propertius writes,

ii. 22, "Nature has given man his wickedness." Our own experience is perhaps the best commentary on the words of Jeremiah; Christians admit it—feel it. If it be said it is the example of others, not a taint in the nature, whence I ask, came that example? A was corrupted by the example of B, and B by C, but whose example corrupted the first of the series, whose only example was himself?

Matt. vii. 13, 14, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."—This has been thought an over severe estimate, but its accuracy is matter of fact and is confirmed by heathen observers. Horace (Sat. i. 4) writes,—

"Take me a man at venture from the crowd,
And he's ambitious, covetous, or proud."

Juvenal (Sat. xiii. 26),—

"Rare are the good, more scarce their number seems
Than Thebes' famed gates or Niles' disparted streams;
Worse than the iron is the present race;
Nature with our corruptions keeps no pace;
Her plastic skill can no vile metal frame
That's base enough to give the age a name."

Homer (*Odyssey* ii. 276)—“Few sons are like the father, the majority are worse, few are better.” These, the testimonies of observant nature, proclaim the truth of the picture sketched in revelation. We know the word of God contains no exaggerations, but it may silence the caviller if we show that the experience of mankind undesignedly confirms the testimonies of the word of God.

John v. 40, “Ye will not come to me that ye may have life;” Ezek. xviii. 31, “Why will ye die?”—Why, it has been asked, does God not do what He seems in these and similar texts so desirous of doing? Is He not omnipotent? Can He not save all, without exception? God does not extinguish human nature, in order to destroy its sinfulness. Were He, in the exercise of omnipotent power, to save mankind, or drag them to heaven against their wills, and in spite of their protests and preferences, He would treat men as dead machines, or as irrational and irresponsible creatures. God reverences, if we may so speak, the noblest workmanship of His hands. He will not drive by force. He draws with cords of love, and with bands of a man. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open, I

will come in and sup with him and he with me.” Rather than do violence to the freedom and responsibility of man, he will wait outside a suppliant for admission. He will conciliate where he might coerce and command. But if the God of grace is blamed for not accomplishing by force what He desires to do by motives, hopes, and menaced penalties, may not the God of providence be equally complained of?—Why has He erected in man’s bosom a beseeching, alarming, threatening, and promising power called conscience, leaving those that disregard it to suffer, and giving to those that listen to it peace, instead of directly compelling men to be holy and therefore happy? If God’s unsuccessful appeals to man through the medium of revelation disprove either the benevolence or power of the God of Christianity, then God’s unsuccessful appeals through the medium of conscience must disprove the benevolence or power of the God of nature and providence. Grace and Providence are streams from the same fountain. There is no objection to the one that does not lie against the other also. The rejecter of the former must, to be consistent, reject the latter also, and thus plunge into

the most revolting of all inconsistencies, atheism itself.

Matt. v. 28, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."—This has been pronounced severe morality; yet there are testimonies from the writings of the highest heathen moralists that show that man, in his best moments, feels it to be just and true.

Seneca writes: "The vestal virgin, who desires to commit fornication, is guilty, even though she commit it not." Cicero writes: "A good man will not only not dare to do, but he will not even dare to think, what he cannot speak of in public." Juvenal writes:

"Thus but intended mischief stayed in time,
Has all the moral guilt of finished crime."

These, and kindred sentiments in heathen writers, are fragments of our aboriginal purity in Paradise, and show that the conscience of humanity, even its wreck, emits at times attestations to the truth of God's word.

Matt. x. 34,—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Startling expressions

like this prove rather the reality and truth of Scripture. Impostors, desirous of popularity and progress, would not have hazarded statements so likely to injure a present popularity, the only object of their efforts. Does it however contradict those passages that announce the Saviour as the Prince of Peace?—that declare one of the essential elements of his kingdom to be peace? We answer, No. The Gospel may be the *occasion* of war, but in itself it is the *cause* of peace. Its holiness coming into collision with men's sins—its denunciations of iniquity falling on those that love it—its rebuke of the most plausible hypocrisy, and its recognition of the least heartfelt desire “to do justly and love mercy”—its enshrining the least seed of truth, and its indifference to the largest husk of ceremony, are calculated as soon as introduced into a fallen world, to rouse the resistance of wicked men. But such resistance is not the fruit of Christianity, but of corrupt human nature, hating and seeking to repel the approach of truth. Does not every attempt to enfranchise the enslaved, to vindicate the oppressed, create around it and in its train the same opposition? Have not the greatest benefactors of the world been

obliged, as they dared, to despise the opposition because they loved the happiness of mankind? The world's scorn was aroused by their lofty contrast to the world's selfishness; and that scorn was an augury of their future success.

Prejudices that have struck their roots into the heart of nations, and twined their fibres around the habits and associations of men, are not easily or gently uprooted. What are all the collisions of society but the results of evil rising to put down righteousness, and of righteousness rising to put down oppression and injustice? Were the introduction of the Gospel followed by no opposition, there would be wanting one of the highest indications of its heavenly origin. While it is true that the "world lieth in wickedness," and "the carnal heart is enmity to God," so long the truth will not want a shadow, nor holiness an opponent.

Luke xiv. 26,—“If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” This has been quoted as a specimen of a severe and cynic morality. It is plain that Scripture invariably enjoins love from

man to man, and still more love from child to parent. This runs through all revelation; of this there can be no reasonable doubt. It is therefore the right way to interpret the solitary, seemingly contradictory text, by the many plain and obvious ones. The word "hate" is used in Scripture comparatively with love. Thus it is stated, in Gen. xxix. 31,—“When the Lord saw that Leah was hated;” but this is explained in the preceding verse, (verse 30,) “he loved Rachel more than Leah;”—“hated,” in verse 31, is the “less loved” in verse 30. So, “If any man hate not his father,” &c., must mean, “If any man love his father above me, serve, or sacrifice, or suffer for an earthly relationship more than for me.”

In the Gospel of Matthew, however, we have the parallel passage, and the meaning of this thereby fixed, (Matt. x. 37;) “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” It is not uncommon to find a relative obligation couched in absolute terms; thus: “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth;” that is—love things on earth in subordination to things in heaven.

Such phraseology, however, is not pecu-

liar to the Bible ; it occurs in heathen writers :—

Cicero *De Officiis* iii. 5 : “ To despise pleasures, riches, and even life itself, and to regard them as nothing when they come to be compared with the public interest, is the duty of a brave and heroic spirit.”

Tyræus, *Ode* iv. 13—18, “ Let us fight with spirit for our country and our children, no longer sparing our souls ;” iii. 3, “ counting his soul as odious, but death dear as the sun.”

Thus the language of the sacred penman is not without precedent, and therefore any opposition to it, because of its form, cannot stop there.

James ii. 10, “ He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all.”—This has been asserted as hyper-rigid morality ; yet it is not really so. If a man steal, he is laid hold on by the law of the land, and punished as guilty. The law does not connive at his conduct till he has murdered, and forged, and libelled. It regards one crime as a violation of it, and holds the criminal guilty. To be guilty of murder, it is not required that the crime be committed in all the forms in which it is possible to do so : the extinction of the life of

another in revenge, or for plunder, is equally murder. The apostle explains the reason when he adds, "for He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet, if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."

Rom. v. 9, "Justified by Christ."

Rom. v. 1, "Justified by faith."

James ii. 24, "By works a man is justified."—These seem contradictory each to the other; but they are not so. We are justified by Christ *meritoriously*; by faith, *instrumentally*; by works, *declaratively*. Christ's righteousness is the ground and title of our admission to the hopes and certainty of happiness. Faith is the instrument, or hand, by which we lay hold on that title, as the hand of a drowning man grasps the rope flung out to him. A holy life is the visible evidence of that state of acceptance which invariably gives birth to all the fruits of the Spirit.

Gen. ii. 2, "And on the seventh day God ended his work, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made."

John v. 17, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

There is no contradiction between these

texts. The one refers to creation, and the other to providence. The former describes God's completion of the successive strata and races consummated by man; the latter denotes God's preserving, regulating, and maintaining, all things animate and inanimate.

Acts vii. 48, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

Exod. xxv. 8, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."

The former text describes the majesty of God, the latter his grace. The one is his absolute dwelling, "light, inaccessible, and full of glory;" the other is his special and gracious presence, "wheresoever two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Eph. v. 29, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh." Matt. v. 29, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out."—The first text is literally true; it is human nature, and every man's experience responds to it: the second is obviously figurative, and denotes that sins as dear from preference, and as near from association, as a right eye, must be renounced and put away at any sacrifice or pain.

Luke i. 33, "Of his kingdom there shall be no end." 1 Cor. xv. 24, "Then cometh the

end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God.”—The first text refers to that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy; of this there shall be no end. The second text relates to the mode of administering his kingdom, which mode will cease when all the objects of his love have been gathered into the region of the full enjoyment of it.

I give these as specimens merely of what are denounced as contradictions. All the seeming contradictions of Scripture can be easily and satisfactorily explained. The harmony that really exists under the discrepancy that appears, is only additional proof of the reality and truthfulness of the Scriptures. When Moses saw an Egyptian fighting with an Israelite and trying to destroy him, he slew the Egyptian and let the Israelite go. When he saw an Israelite fighting with an Israelite, he separated them and made them friends. Even so, when we see an error assaulting or overlaying a truth, let us destroy the error and emancipate the truth; but when we see a truth seemingly in conflict with a truth, let us reconcile them, and show them thus reconciled to all.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

“FOR all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.” These, the words of Peter, are not the original. They are only the echo. Isaiah had uttered them before him. The first half of the sentence is the untiring chant of nature, the last the unchanging voice of God. The peasant looks on his fields, and the pent up citizen on his sickly plant in his flower-pot, and both feel, “the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away.” On the other hand, the humblest believer on earth and the highest saint beside God’s throne, alike proclaim, “the word of God endureth for ever.” The wind that sighs as it sweeps through the trees of the forest in fitful and freezing gusts—the showers of dead leaves that fall at their roots

—and the naked skeleton branches that shiver in the blast, are the solemn and pathetic trumpets that convey to the listening ear the dirge of things seen.

David gave utterance to this truth in his days, "As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." Nearly three hundred years after David, Isaiah proclaimed the same analogy, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field—the grass withereth, the flower fadeth:" and seven hundred years subsequent to Isaiah, Peter records the same sentiment in nearly the same words. The outward laws and movements of nature thus continue from the beginning. The same sun that shone on Abel and Noah and Abraham shines on us. These same stars that sparkle over our houses, looked upon the fall and the flood, on Marathon and Thermopylæ, Waterloo, Nineveh, Constantinople and London, on Noah and Napoleon. The grass grew and withered under the footsteps of Jacob as under ours; "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But this, instead of being ground of atheistic

presumption, is really evidence of the unchangeableness of God.

One lesson taught us in these words is the truth and reality of a brotherhood between us and flowers and trees, between the green things that wither, and the bright and beautiful ones that die. The dead violet is the fragrant memorial of the infant that drooped and died. The still unscattered dust of the flower that fades in June brings to our remembrance the fair form that was suddenly breathed on by some mysterious emissary, and passed away in her noon. Another falls from the tree of life like that sere leaf. In the woods in winter we cannot be long alone; visions and associations will gather around us—departed forms and almost forgotten faces will rise like thin shadows from the grave, and almost forgotten faces will come forth from the past and bear witness to the words which, like monumental inscriptions on the pavement, the feet of traffic are continually defacing, but which the sweep of years renders again clear and legible. “All flesh is as grass; the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth.”

Mortality is the universal attribute. Man has his autumn as well as buds or flowers,

and the same casualties too ; a frost nips the flowers—a worm gnaws the root of the grass, or a blight falls on it from the air, and it withers. The great majority of the human family perishēs in the mid-time of its days, and though some sheltered plant may retain its beauty and its fragrance amid the wreck of its faded sisterhood, it also must droop and die. God has written it, and no prescriptions or balms or care can reverse it, “All flesh is as grass; the grass withereth;” and lest it should be supposed that aristocracy and wealth and beauty may possibly be exempted from the common lot, it is added, “And the flower,” that is, the chief portions of humanity, “fadeth.”

But the universal fact of death is not the only lesson taught by the withering grass. It seems to teach us how to die. The productions of nature die as if they felt full confidence in Him that made and summons them. The leaf drops gently from the tree without a murmur—the flower welcomes the death-frost as a messenger from its Maker, bows its head upon its stalk, and yields its richest perfume as it dies. From the heath-bell on the common to the oak in the forest, all die softly; God says to each, “Return,”

and they answer in music, "We return." Why should not Christians equally trust! Why should not they yield themselves as gently and willingly to God! Does God care for flowers and grass? "Are not we much better than they?"

Nature also, as she dies, looks most beautiful. The trees in autumn seem to put on their coronation robes. Their leaves assume their most gorgeous tints; and when all these leaves fall in the forest, it is only to remove the intercepting screen, and let the sunbeam and starlight shine with unobstructed effulgence. May not our sun be fairest at setting! May not we, like flowers and trees, go down to the grave in joy? May not we, like Simeon, depart in peace? Should not our death be an euthanasia! Death is but the removal of the broad shadow of mortality, the emancipation of the spirit,—the porch of life,—the vestibule of glory. These reflections, however, all assume that this life is not our all. Were there no destiny beyond it, within the reach of all that will, man's lot would be worse a thousand fold than that of the dumb universe around him; and if there be a life beyond this, the nature of which is contingent on what we become in the present, how great is

the folly of that man who fits himself for every office upon earth, but takes no thought and makes no preparation for eternity; who strives to be everything except a Christian; who cares much about many things, but nothing about his soul!

All that man admires and pursues on earth, nevertheless, must perish as the grass, and as the flower of the grass. Is it personal beauty we glory in? It has all the prominence, but all the evanescence also, of "the flower of the grass." Like the bloom on a plum or peach, touch it, and it is gone! Is it intellectual wisdom? Is not the wisdom of yesterday the folly of to-day? Have not theories once deemed perfect, canonized by infallible Popes and sung by great poets, been afterwards dismissed as puerile, or rejected as untrue? If future centuries are yet to follow that which is already half-spent, they may look back on our railroads, and steamers, and electric telegraphs, and laws, and literature, and pity or smile amid their brilliant discoveries, and repeat then as we do now, "The grass withereth and the flower fadeth."

Is it the productions of genius that we cherish! Where are the wonders of our

Athenian pencil? Where are the all but living creations of the Corinthian chisel? Where are the gates of Thebes—the temple of Diana—the columns of the Parthenon, the Pantheon?

Is it wealth in which we trust? Of all earthly possessions it is the most precarious. In all its shapes, and formulas, and representatives, it perishes. It melts in our hands; we spend it most profusely in youth, when it would be most desirable to save it, and we hoard it most penuriously in old age, just when we must be taken from it. It is liable to take wings and flee away. Kingdoms, empires, colleges, fortunes, daily fade like the flower. The crash of one throne mingles with the echoes of a former; and the *débris* of one party forms the foundation of another. Our ships founder at sea, and rich argosies perish; our splendid mansions and public edifices are consumed by the flame that revels amid their glory, and leaves behind but its black footprints to tell the tidings of its havoc. Your health withers as the grass, and your renown as “the flower of the grass.”

Languages change, ceremonies vary, sacraments are temporary; Sabbaths exist like little ponds, till the ocean of eternity over-

flows them; prayer continues only while there are wants, and a ministry while there is ignorance; but around this dissolving world one thing abides—the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

Aggressions have only served to vindicate its truth, and reveal its lustre. The theories of former geologists have withered like the grass. Genesis endureth for ever. The garnets of Falhun, the crystals of the Alps, emeralds from Brazil, spars from Derbyshire, and rubies from Ceylon, all cast illustrative light on the word of the Lord.

The theories of speculative minds, the badges of sects, the shibboleths of parties, the opinions of schoolmen, and the decrees of synods, have withered like the grass; but “the word of the Lord endureth for ever;” and “this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” What? Let us read, “The soul that sins shall die;” “the wages of sin is death.” These propositions are as true to-day as they were five thousand years ago. Sin and suffering are cause and effect. Penalty follows crime here and hereafter; God says so. It is in vain that any attempt, practically or speculatively, to disprove the connexion. The last fire shall not

dissolve or exhaust it. Let us not shut our eyes to it, and try to reason ourselves into a disbelief of its reality.

2. "All have sinned;" "there is none righteous, no, not one;" "God hath concluded (shut up) all under sin." This also endureth for ever. They that are saints in heaven were once sinners upon earth. All now on earth are shut up in this condemnation; there is no exception; we who read these lines are inmates of this great prison. We fancy there is no prison because we do not see the bars, and chains, and locks, and each seems to do as he pleases. But this is Satan's delusion; he wishes you to think you are free while you are in chains—that you see while you are blind, and are the inmates of a palace though in reality captives in a prison. It is of no use to oppose this truth; it is neither the withering grass nor the fading flower, but the "Word of the Lord which endureth for ever." They alone whose eyes have been opened, and who have been emancipated by the Spirit of God, now see that the iron had entered into their souls, and that the sophisms of Satan, and the suggestions of flesh and blood were but the in-

toxicating drugs that stupefied their sense of the reality of their state.

3. "Christ died for our sins." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "God hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life."

This is the word we preach, neither spent in its descent from heaven, nor wasted in its transmission through ages; fresh, and beautiful, and holy as at first; repeated every Sabbath, read in every Bible—the eloquence of many thousand pulpits, and the music of many tongues. It is heaven's jubilee, sounding in the cells of the great prison; it is the light of eternal day, shining through its gratings; Christ crucified is the commencement, the core, and the coronal of Christianity. The Gospel is not a mere directory, or a loftier law than Sinai's, but a medicine, a system of restoration; and the great and only medium of that restoration is the vicarious death and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God.

This truth endureth for ever ; it is enshrined in glory. The Lamb is seen amid the splendour of the throne ; “ God manifest in the flesh,” is the peculiarity, the glory, the substance of the Gospel.

“ This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Other knowledge may be ornamental, but this is essential—vital. All other wisdom may wither as the grass, but this endureth for ever. All else may be “ meat or drink,” or form, or ceremony ; but this is “ righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost.”

4. “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.” This, too, is an eternal truth—an irreversible decision. It admits of no exception ; no privileges exempt from it ; kings and subjects must equally undergo it before they can enter the kingdom of heaven. Nor is this a superficial or mere extrinsic change ; it is not the surrender of one theory at the bidding of another ; nor is it the expulsion from the mind of one system of opinions to make way for the introduction of another ; it is not becoming a Calvinist, or an Arminian, or an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian. It is being

made a new creature, an anointed Christian—"turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." It is "a new heart;" it is life within and light without. The experience of this change is the highest evidence in the subject of it, that Christianity is from God. He sees and feels, and therefore believes. He has seen enough—a Saviour's blood, and a Saviour's cross. He sees heaven prepared for him, and feels his heart prepared for it. A lie cannot do this; a falsehood has no power to create a moral revolution. He has a new object of worship; no longer vain-glory, riches, self; but God; and this not the absolute God, but God in Christ a Father; a new object of pursuit; not what to eat and drink; not the care of self, or the concerns of earth, but the glory of God: whether "he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he does all to the glory of God."

5. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Look unto me, all ends of the earth, and be ye saved." "Come, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "The Spirit

and the bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and take of the water of life freely.”

Such is the free and unrestricted invitation of God to all the purchased and promised blessings of the gospel. There is not a responsible creature on the frozen ledges of Greenland, or on the scorched and burning sands of Sierra Leone, to whom we are not commissioned to address these words. The great complaint of the waiting Saviour is not that too many or too great sinners come to Him. It is, “Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.” No one need wait for what will not be,—greater worthiness before he close with the offers of the Saviour—nor need any wait for deeper conviction of sin; for it is not the degree, but the fact of conviction Christ meets and ministers to. The everlasting arms are now outstretched. God’s mercy will never be ampler—nor the blood of Jesus more efficacious—nor the gates of heaven wider—nor the way of life smoother. Our responsibilities deepen and multiply every day. The hour of mercy is not a fixture and long as a thousand years, but perpetually on the wing. Each of us has his day. How dreadful must be the retrospect

from a judgment seat, with nothing but trampled privileges for it to fix on!—how terrible to remember that from the cradle to the grave the voice of mercy was addressed to us in vain!—how overwhelming to hear the “Depart ye,” that we must obey, uttered by the same lips which so often cried, “Come ye,” and which we would not obey!

How deep a hell must their prison be, who scorned the beseeching voice and the atoning blood of the Son of God!

Our sun is not yet set, nor our privileges perished. The word of the Lord endures, and we hear it: how long we shall be spared to hear it, God only knows, for we know not what a day may bring forth. Whatever opposes this word must perish, whatever contends against it must be crushed. Infidelity—the word of man—however musical its utterances, will be hushed—its airy frost-work, however glittering in the sunbeams, will be dissolved. It is a system of negations—it has no nutriment for man’s soul. It has the withering without the reality of the grass. The Bible it will yet see is not a fiction—nor real religion fanaticism—nor anxiety about the soul madness—nor adherence to vital truth bigotry. Superstition, too,

in all its shapes will be dissipated. It comes from beneath, and it returns again to its level. No patronage can prevent it, no persecution shield it; but God's word will endure for ever. This gospel is divine in its birth, and eternal in its destiny. Christianity enunciates truths that are above the tide-mark of time, and rooted in the attributes of God. It cannot be extinguished, for God is its might—it cannot die, for God is its life. Perfect holiness is of itself perpetuity. It is the answer to our most anxious inquiries, the solution of our greatest perplexities. It appeals to what is deepest and dearest in the heart of humanity, and therefore every regenerated heart is ready to protest against every attempt to rob us of jewels of inestimable price.

Even in this world, humility is triumphing over pride, and love over hatred, and gentleness over wrath, and these alone are auguries of what must be.

“Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers :
But error wounded writhes with pain,
And dies amid her worshippers.”

Ancient dynasties may fall, and popular governments explode, but Christ “shall reign

over the house of David forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Thrones may totter, and powerful sceptres be shivered, but "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

We need no more fear that the Sun of Righteousness will set in clouds, than that the burning centre of our system shall fall from his socket. Christianity will appear most beautiful when marble statues are defaced, and monuments of bronze are blended with the dust. Eternity itself will attest how perishing is all that the world calls beautiful or great, and how lasting is all which God pronounces true.

Christianity is from God !

THE END.

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